This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

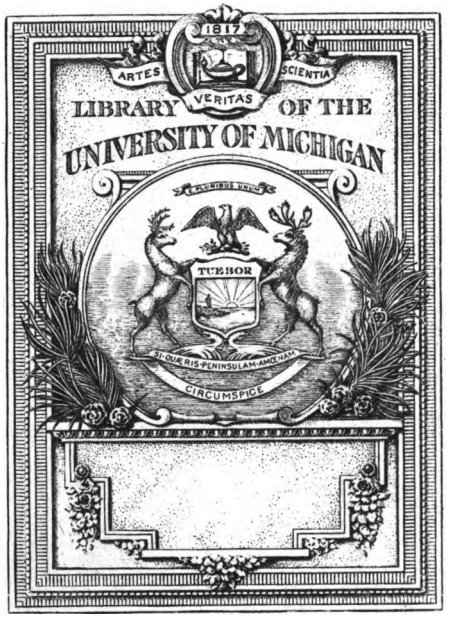
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



Digitized by Google

838
H47
tL54

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE WORKS

OF

HEINRICH HEINE

V.

Digitized by Google

THE WORKS

OF

HEINRICH HEIN

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY

CHARLES GODFREY LELAND

(HANS BREITMANN)

VOLUME V.

LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN
1892

Digitized by Google

GERMANY

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I.

LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN
1892

Digitized by Google

Heine to be equalled by few writers, and the "Germany," from the same point, to be by far his best work. One cannot praise too highly, as regards depth and value, the manner in which he has seized, in a most independent, original manner, on the leading names which truly illustrate German thought since Luther, or the exquisite skill and refined art with which he has concisely and beautifully set them forth. And even beyond this is his great idea of enforcing, as no one ever did before him, the great truth that the philosophers, metaphysicians, scholars, and literary men of Germany; who have been proverbial not merely among the vulgar, but too often among the better educated, as mere dreamers, speculators, and spinners of transcendental and visionary cobwebs of the brain; were in fact the intellects which in the most literal and practical manner trained and developed the German mind and nation to its present position. Heine was probably the only man of his time who perfectly understood this fact, and even now —important as it is to every *thinker*—it is very far from being understood, especially in "Anglo-Saxony." The perception of it induced in our author's mind the wonderful parallel which runs through his work, like a motive through an opera, of the progress of the mental revolution in Germany, and the political in France. The simile is

Digitized by Google

grandly sustained and carried to a triumphant conclusion. The work is a braid of many threads, of which this is not the least brilliant. This led Heine to the remarkable, the loudly uttered and earnest prophecy, bidding the French beware the day when Germany should be united. But to point out all the profound, valuable, and beautiful thoughts which occur in this great summary of the causes of the development of German intellect in its every phase, would be like commenting on every item in an index of the work. I may summarise its merits by saying that one cannot conceive of any really intelligent and liberal or *truly* strong-minded thinker who would not be fascinated with this book.

And this brings us to the other side of the shield, that is, to the defects and errors which such a thinker or reader can readily detect and reject, as a skilled miner throws away from his gold the dross which would induce a more ignorant person to reject the whole. But to find the gold, one must *understand* the quartz which incrusts the oxide of iron, and the glittering pyrites which conceals and deludes; nay, to a certain degree, he must also appreciate their value as accompaniments of the precious metal. That is to say, the truly skilled seeker who most thoroughly masters a subject is in all cases the

Digitized by Google

one who understands its faults. And for this reason I have, while leaving it to the reader himself in great measure to detect the golden flakes, *dont la lumière saut aux yeux*, pointed out; not without much serious reflection and care, and inspired deeply with a desire to present Heine as he was in very sincere truth; the strange and sad failings and sins of commission and omission which run all through his works, like the rugged lumps and vacant hollows in a piece of stalagmite. The first of these faults is a manifest inability to accord or co-ordinate error and merit in others, so as to give us a fair and harmonious idea of the *balance* of any author described. This is the result of two causes, one of which was an insatiable petty, small-feminine love of gossip and scandal,[1] in spite of the true principle which he announces, that it is by the works of a man, and not his life, that he should be judged. The second was an almost boyish susceptibility, which made him for the moment altogether enthusiastic, either with admiration or anger, at a character or a

[1] This has grown enormously of late years. I recently found in one of the best known minor libraries in Europe two *lives* of a distinguished English poet, but not a line of his works. It would seem as if to the general reader an author's work is rapidly becoming a mere pin on which to hang his biography.

Digitized by Google

book, without reflecting on the other side. And yet again with these defects was often intertwined an equally childish jealousy, or merely personal dislike, which he had not the good sense to control or conceal, the result being that certain characters — as, for instance, August Wilhelm von Schlegel—are so presented that we know not whether they are drivelling idiots or debauchees with hardly a mind, or men of genius and leaders of great intellectual movements, as the Schlegels certainly were, of which Heine indeed informs us in certain places, but gives much less stress to it than he does to mere disreputable chambermaids' gossip regarding them. This is not invariably the case, but it occurs so often that the reader would do well to bear it in mind.

Heine had lived in touch or time with many eminent men, with the very common result that he thought too much of some and too little of others—as is generally the result of personal acquaintanceship, attractions, or antipathies. He had not the vast impartiality of a Goethe in this respect. Hence he neglects, or is unable to invariably set forth, the real influence or action of certain authors in their time, though he does it well with others. But the two great faults of his "Germany" are these. Heine wished to be

Digitized by Google

regarded as the first person who made German literature and thought known to France, which was to him really the world. England he ignored, because he had no hold on or fame in it. But Madame de Staël, aided by her early teacher, August W. Von Schlegel, had done the one well in *L'Allemagne*, and Victor Cousin had elaborately, and in fact admirably, achieved the other; therefore Heine treats these authors, especially the two men, with an unconcealed hatred which is simply as violent as it is more generally silly, his object being to decry them, out of mere envy. For I do not believe that Heine had at heart a poor opinion of their works: he was far too intelligent and well read not to appreciate them.

It may be indicated as a great defect that our author devotes such disproportionate space to the folk-lore of goblins and fairies, great as its influence in Germany has been; and that even in these chapters, as in Elementary Spirits, he wanders widely from the subject, while in other places he gives many pages to spiteful gossip over petty people like Raupauch (as it were to prove at length that they are not worth noticing), while he quite omits to mention, or else to illustrate in any way whatever, many very famous men. Whether it arose from impatience of labour or research, it

Digitized by Google

is certain that in illustration by citation Heine was very unfortunate, that of Uhland being anything but fairly representative, while the old Danish ballads and legends, to which many pages are given, are somewhat out of place and badly selected.

The reader who is not familiar with the subject must again be on his guard as to Heine's really arrogant assertion that he was the first to make known to the people the systems of the great German philosophers. He was a fairly accomplished "metaphysician" for his time, but he did not at all perceive what was common to all schools, and he believed, like all Germans of his day—departing from *cogito ergo sum*—that somewhere there must exist some kind of absolute philosophy founded on theism or "spirit." The grain which he boasts of having taken from the storehouse of German philosophy, and cleaned for the people, turns out too often to be mere "chaff." He does not give, in fact, intelligently and succinctly, as many before him had done, the *method* of any philosopher; and in several cases this is done so imperfectly as to almost induce a suspicion that he had not clearly understood them. This is certainly the case as regards the methods of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling, while as to Hegel he really tells us nothing at all. I do not think

Digitized by Google

that I err when I say that for a reader who is interested in the subject, it is easier to understand these writers from their own pages than from Heine's eccentric, though brilliant and genial, mingling of metaphysics, mockery and memoir. He did *not* explain German metaphysics well or clearly to the multitude; he simply made its vast influence understood by entertaining and personal gossip, interspersing so much that was vivacious, original, and true with a great deal that was frivolous and sometimes false, as to produce the greatest masterpiece of *mélange* known in literature. Rabelais had shown how genius and learning could be allied to illustrate broad humour and life, and Sterne how all this could be blended with sentiment. Heine tried the bolder and broader experiment of combining these elements with serious discussion of literature and politics. Sometimes his stream runs very shallow as regards sound knowledge of his subject; great dry rocks of ancient facts appear which he could not rise to or cover; but he then makes all the greater babbling and bubbling, and hurries along to some more congenial and softer, perhaps muddier, spot, where he presently hollows out a tolerably deep eddy, and whirls round and round exultingly, springing, like one of the dancing dervishes whom he cites, into a fancied conception

Digitized by Google

of the absolute, but always bright and brilliant, sparkling and amusing.

Heine posed as a deeply read man on most subjects—as he should have been, to treat so many properly; but it would amaze not a few of his devoted admirers to know how slender was his erudition, even where he tried to appear learned. This is apparent in several places in "Germany," which occasionally presents pitiful illustration of a man's endeavouring to carry on a great business with a small capital. And yet he never comes to actual bankruptcy; in fact, with many he has illimitable credit for solid wisdom, which credit is in the end to him as good as capital. True, he is often hard put to it to meet his notes, or make good his vaunts; very often he stands at his own door "barking" about the superiority of his ready-made clothes for the soul; but in the end he attracts a crowd. And then the coats or waistcoats, if not of the very best wool or make, are still so beautifully dyed, and have such brilliant and original buttons!—nay, there is much jewellery in the way of studs and pins generously thrown in *gratis*, so that the customers depart well satisfied. Nor can it be said that they do not get their money's worth, or even very great bargains—all that can be said is that always in life people should know exactly what it is

Digitized by Google

that they are buying. Or, again, Heine was like a large and really valuable diamond, full of flaws of which he was conscious and knew that others noticed them, and yet he wished to be valued as if perfect. All of which he has said of himself as clearly and far more bitterly than I have done.

This flaw in the diamond is Heine's caprice, instability, and self-will. There are women who expect to have all their follies, tricks, and faults forgiven with a smile, because "it is pretty Fanny's way," and who fancy that all their little rebellious whims or even evil manners and deeds must be passed over because they are so engaging. It is a pity when such women are really gifted and clever, for the result is to common sense a painful paradox. It cannot be denied that Heine had this feminine weakness, that he was over-conscious of his own genius and marvellous brilliancy and versatility, and so conducted himself habitually like a spoiled belle with a great deal of the *femme nerveuse* in her nature. In Germany the youthful belle of the *Reisebilder* occasionally seems to be *un peu sur le retour*, showing traces of *la vieille coquette*, when her *minauderies* are terrible. And yet she is as clever and amusing as ever!

We have the feeling as regards Heine that if any one had said to him, "Unstable as water, thou

Digitized by Google

shalt not excel," he would have immediately retorted, "Ah! but you can't get along without water, you know." Which is unanswerable, but not an answer, neither is it wisdom, and yet Heine set himself up for a sage of sages and a leader in politics. Sometimes this king's jester disguises himself as a wise man and sits in the assembly, and for a time amazes and amuses all present by his marvellous genius; but anon there is heard a tinkling of morrice-bells, and there is seen a flash of red ribbons and tinsel—some one twitches away the philosopher's robe, when out skips the mad rogue with a roar of laughter and a screaming joke, in naught ashamed, and in a few minutes reappears *incognito* in another guise. "And yet he *did* speak wisely for a time; yes, very beautifully, and oh, so gaily!" says some one regretfully. And so say we all of us. He spoke more sagely than our sages do, and yet he was a jester all the while. In justice to "Germany" it must be said that in it, for the greater portion, our author sits well-behaved in the council and speaks admirably.

I would call the reader's attention to the fact that, until the appearance of this present work, there was not in existence a *complete* edition of Heine's "Germany." The author professed to have written it in French as well as in German, but

Digitized by Google

the aid of a secretary or of an assistant translator, who was *not* Heine, is so marked and manifest in many places as to be beyond all question. There are often entire pages, or several pages together, to be found in the German which are wanting in the French version, but occasionally it is *vice versâ*, while differences of mere sentences or expressions are very numerous. Heine expresses in the beginning the most stony-hearted independence as to all men's opinions, but he is generally very careful to omit things which would offend his French readers, as, for instance, by leaving out the word "Catholic" wherever it is possible. Where there are additions in the French text, the German editor translates them into *German* and gives them in a footnote; but he omits several important passages, and rarely takes account of minor expressions. As I presume that English and Americans who care to read Heine, can understand French, I have thought it better to give these variations in the original. I do not exaggerate when I say that the labour of thus collating, comparing, and selecting every word in the two versions has been, not twice, but perhaps thrice as great as simple translation from one language would have been; in saying which I judge by the work which I devoted to the *Reisebilder* and *Florentine Nights*. In a few cases where the

Digitized by Google

French version presented unmistakable originality and beauty of expression superior to the German, I have availed myself of it; but in all cases, every word, from the beginning, has been based on frequent reading or study of the latter, and I therefore trust that critics and readers will be lenient, considering the difficulty which this double task involved.

The difficulty in translating Heine, of which we hear so much, does not consist by any means entirely in rendering his exquisite grace, his inimitable sprightliness and *tours de force*—it very often lies in *not* following his intolerable tautology of words, iteration of ideas, or of commonplace conceptions, his brusque French-German terms, or common slang, and in occasionally feeling obliged to put some kind of expressive termination to a sentence which, when reduced to strict English sense, and deprived of its *et cætera*, is only a winding corridor which leads to nothing. There are certain readers with whom the untranslatable, even if trash, passes for the inimitable; but as a rule, perhaps without exception, the author who is really untranslatable is not worth a version. Heine is by no means deficient in passages which, if they were no better written in English than they are in German, would be condemned in the humblest writer. Our author was by no means

Digitized by Google

himself always an accurate or conscientious translator, as I have shown by the very curious Latin original of a tale which he strangely perverted, to make a point.

It is usual to extol the French version as a miracle of translation. But there are pages together in it in which we find serious and manifestly careless or reckless omissions of ideas, more frequently those of important words, or petty departures from the spirit of the original in almost every sentence—as the reader may easily verify from the footnotes in this volume. It is not possible—discounting the natural grace of the French language itself, even gold-leaf being always gold-leaf wherever applied—to conceive of any English translation being made so inaccurately by anybody who understood the original and dared to publish. It has been said that Heine "threw himself into himself" in making this French version; if so, it is very certain that, like the juggler who performed a similar flip-flap, he came out Somebody Else.

I trust that the reader will accept the footnotes, whether of explanation or comment, which I have given with kindly feeling. Where I think that the author has in any way erred, either as to books, data, or character, I have taken the liberty of commenting, to save certain readers from

Digitized by Google

being misled. Many will not require such suggestions; I beg them not to regard my remarks as uncalled for, and to reflect on those who may desire some benefit from them. Such as they are, these notes have cost me much reading and search, which I pray may be put down to my good account. As regards serious effort to translate carefully and clearly, retaining as well as I could the spirit of a writer with whom I have long been familiar, and who himself expressed gratification at the publication of my translation of his *Reisebilder*, I can only say that I have taken a degree of pains which I never before devoted to any similar work.

CHARLES GODFREY LELAND.

GENEVA, *July* 1891.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE GERMAN PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

THE review of German intellectual effort in the past, which Henry Heine published in French under the general title *De l'Allemagne*, is now brought for the first time before the German public as a comprehensive whole. The author had in the prefaces to different parts of his works fully explained the reasons which forced him to print it in Germany in fragments. These were of an extremely foreign, yet none the less compulsive, character. On the one hand, he was obliged to hasten his work in setting before the public of his native land the articles written in French for French journals, lest some unauthorised third person should profit by a translation of them. At that time there was not only no international treaty or copyright law which secured to an author the privilege of possession and transla-

Digitized by Google

tion of his own works when written in a foreign country, but an edict of the German Confederacy of the 5th of April 1832 had declared that no printed piece, in German, of a political character, of less than twenty sheets, could be admitted to, or sold in any of its states, without previous permission from the government. And again, the hindrances of the censorship assumed every year a more threatening character, until from Wolfgang Menzel's denunciation of that decree of December 10, 1835, it resulted that in connection with the writings of the so-called Young Germany, all the works of Henry Heine were put *in Acht und Bann*, under suspicion and prohibition, and even caused a total suspension of the sale of all the books issued by his publisher in several German cities. A work of Heine's with the general title *Über Deutschland*, or "On Germany," was at any rate previously suppressed by the censorship and the reactionary government; it being a very mixed collection of philosophical, artistic, and literary-historical, or novelistic fragments, as contained in the *Salon*. It is well known that Heine found these portions of his work published in fragments so vilely docked and disfigured by the scissors of the censor that their very meaning had vanished. If the reader will compare this present work—enlarged from the original manuscript and the

Digitized by Google

French edition — even in the most superficial manner with the earlier German editions, he will at once perceive that Heine, in spite of the continually increasing difficulties of his situation as an author, never once in his "Germany" did aught unworthy of him, or sacrificed *the idea* to remunerative concessions.

"I conjure you," he wrote to his friend Heinrich Laube, during the time of denunciations of Menzel (on the 25th of November 1835), "by all you hold dear, either to take no part in the war which Young Germany is now waging, or at least to observe a very furtive neutrality, and do not try this youth with a single word. Draw a line clearly between political and religious questions. In the former you may make as many concessions as you please, for political forms of state and of government are only a mean—monarchy or republic, democratic or aristocratic institutions are of equal consequence, so long as the idea of life itself is not determined. In due time will come the question whether we are to have a monarchy or republic, or aristocracy, or even absolutism; for which latter I have no great disinclination. By such a distinction in the question, one can also allay the scruples of the censorship, for discussions of religious and moral principles cannot be silenced without annulling the whole *Protestant*

Digitized by Google

freedom of thought and of judgment; and here we meet with the approval of the Philistines. You understand me when I say the religious and moral principle; though both are, like pork and pig's meat, one and the same. Morality is only religion passed into manners; and if the religion of the past is rotten, then morals stink. We need a sound religion, so that manners may be sounder and better based than they are at present when their only substratum is unbelief and worn-out hypocrisy."

I have retained almost unchanged the arrangement of the French edition of the book "On Germany," made by Heine himself. I have only left to the last division of the third book of the "Romantic School" (which formed the preface of the French issue), the place which it occupied in the previous German edition. And I have, moreover, for internal and external reasons, allotted to the Confessions, which formed the conclusion of the latest French edition, another position. The seventh volume of this complete series would have been, as regards size, out of all proportion to the other volumes, had I included in it the Confessions; but what was of still more importance was the inner reason that this essay, which as regards the time of composition and its subject-matter, forms the conclusion of the literary activity

Digitized by Google

of the poet, seemed to be most appropriately placed in the last volume of the prose writings. The omissions and softenings of certain sentences to which Heine refers in the preface to the French edition, are of too unimportant a nature to require a simultaneous or preparatory reading of the Confessions.

The essay, "For the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany," which first appeared in French under the title *De l'Allemagne depuis Luther*, in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, March 1, November 15, and December 15, 1834, appeared soon after, in the beginning of 1835, in a German translation as the second volume of the *Salon*, but in such an absolutely mangled and abbreviated form, that the patriotic aim of the work, if nothing else, was entirely lost. In the second edition, in the year 1852, the most important omissions were made good by the author from the French version, because Heine believed that the first manuscript of the work, which he had sent to Hamburg, had there perished in the great fire of 1842. But it was subsequently found among certain papers of the publisher's which had been rescued, and has been used in preparing and enlarging this present edition.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

TO THE FRENCH EDITION OF THE BOOK "ON GERMANY."

THE limited space of a preface will not permit me to give in detail all which I would gladly communicate to the public. I have therefore preferred to present these confessions of the author as a whole in the last part of my work, and I even confess that my dear reader would do well to begin his reading at this latter end.[1] That is serious advice. Those who may by chance be acquainted with the first edition of my book, will see at the first glance that the new one contains more than half as much, and that a great number of passages were cut out of it, so that this book "On Germany" has an altogether different appearance, and is not indeed the same book.

In several new parts which I have added,

[1] *Vide* the foregoing preface by the German publisher.

Digitized by Google

especially in those which form the whole second half, I have undertaken to unveil to the view of the French public the most secret and characteristic treasures of the German people, and in which, as I may say, all its dreamy, yet at the same time strong and vigorous, character is set forth. I here speak of those traditions and tales which live in the language of the lower classes, the best and most original of which have never been noticed. I have here given more than one of these, which I myself have heard by hearths in humble huts, narrated by some vagabond beggar or old and blind grandmother; but the strange, uncanny reflection which the flickering flame of the fire of twigs cast on the face of the narrator, and the beating of the hearts of the hearers who listened in happy silence, I could not render, and these rustic, well-nigh barbaric stories deprived of that, lose their most attractive wondrous secret charm.

I refrain from making any remarks relative to the expurgations or elisions which my book has experienced. By so doing I have at least escaped the danger of displaying any want of tact. I have suppressed bitter sallies which were once inspired by youthful and unjust ill-feeling, and I have done the same with the flattering and complimentary words of dedication, which would

Digitized by Google

to-day be an anachronism,[1] and whose untimely form would now produce an effect the very reverse of what the author intended when the first edition of his work appeared. In those days the name to which I offered that homage was, as it were, a shibboleth which indicated the most advanced party in the human battle for freedom, and which was also cruelly crushed by the gens-darme and courtiers of the old school. By thus favouring the conquered, I cast a proud challenge at their foes; and I often proclaimed my sympathy for the martyrs, who were then reviled, and that bitterly and unmercifully, by the press, as well as in society. I did not fear to incur the ridicule with which their good cause, as it must be fairly admitted, was a little burdened. Things have changed since then: the martyrs of the former time are now no longer mocked or persecuted; they no longer bear their cross—unless it be the cross of the *legion d'honneur*. They no longer wander barefooted through the wastes of Arabia to seek for the emancipated woman, or free-love—these liberators of mankind from the yoke of marriage, these bursters of wedding-bonds,

[1] The German publisher here cites the dedication of the first edition to Prosper Enfantin, which is, however, of no special interest, and which by its insertion directly contradicts the spirit of Heine's wish—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

have since their return from the East been wedded themselves, and become the most undaunted marrying men, or *épouseurs*, in the world, and they wear boots.[1] Most of these men now live in clover, some of them are brand-new millionaires, and more than one have risen to the most honourable and profitable positions—people travel quickly now by railways. These former apostles, who dreamed of a golden age for all mankind, have contented themselves with carrying on the age of silver, or the rule of the money-god (*dieu argent*), who is the father and mother of all, and who is all—perhaps the same deity of whom it was preached, "All is in him, nothing is out of him, nothing is without him." But this is not the God which the writer of these lines adores. Indeed, I prefer to him the poor God

[1] *Und sie tragen Stiefel. Stiefel* means a boot; also, jocosely, a portion. They have gone in for booty and beauty is a rough rendering. The allusions here are all to the famous socialistic effort or community, established about 1830 in Paris by Enfantin and others, which is referred to in Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*. Singularly enough, many who embarked in this wild scheme afterwards became eminent as statesmen and promoters of railways, and other great speculations. Reybaud, in "Jerome Paturôt," and in an amusing sketch of this society, gives a picture in which a neophyte with an aureole round his head is represented as cleaning the boots of the brethren. It was a part of the great after-movement of the first revolution which produced Fourier, Cabét, and many more world-betterers of the sudden-reform kind.—*Translator*.

Digitized by Google

of Nazareth, who had not a farthing, and who was the protector of beggars and sufferers. As I belong somewhat to this latter class, I should be guilty of great folly if I paid old-fashioned compliments to the proud victors and fortunate ones of the age, who can get on perfectly well without them.

I cannot too earnestly urge the fact that I had not the intention to give a perfect picture of Germany. I only wished to here and there lift the veil which covers this mysterious land, and if the reader has not seen all, or but a small portion, he will at least have seen that little as it truly is, while he will be scantily or not at all informed by books in which the perfection of intelligence is promised, and which give nothing but a dry and fruitless, though it may be an accurate and conscientious, enumeration of facts.

As regards German literature, my book contains only the history of the so-called Romantic school; and as I had determined to give the most accurate information as to the writers who belong to it, I was of course obliged to speak more in detail of them than of German poets of a higher rank, who were gifted with far greater talent, yet had no place therein. I have even passed over in silence several great authors who are sometimes included among its allies, but who in my opinion

Digitized by Google

have naught to do with it; as, for instance, Henry von Kleist, and my late friend, Karl Immermann, and Christian Grabbe, all three men of great genius. They are, indeed, giants when compared to those writers of the Romantic school of whom I have spoken in my book; and they can, without contradiction, be regarded as the most distinguished poets of the Goethe period. Certainly no one of them has been since then surpassed, though the German theatre has at present two poets of rarest merit in the person of my friend Friedrich Hebbel, the composer of "Judith," and Alfred Meissner, author of the tragedy known as "The Wife of Urias." The first is allied in spirit to Kleist and Grabbe, and a trifling critic of the day would not be capable of appreciating his genius; the other, Alfred Meissner, is much more accessible, his public is greater, he has a soul inspired with passion, and I am convinced that he will yet attain to the popularity of Frederic Schiller, whose presumptive heir he is at present in Germany.

I have remarked that I could not mention in my book several of our great German poets because they did not fit into the frames of my gallery, which was devoted entirely to pictures of the Romantic school. Among these great men are several lyrical poets who, owing to the direction which their souls steeped in romance have taken,

Digitized by Google

seem to be allied to it. Of these are four whose talents approach those of our greatest poets. They are my late friend, Adelbert von Chamisso, who was French by birth, and the admirable Friedrich Rückert, whose imagination is of a luxuriant oriental fulness; the third is my friend, Count Auersperg, known by the name of Anastasius Grün, a lyric poet, rich to excess in imagery, and gifted with a great and noble soul; finally, the fourth, but recently appearing on the scene, is Ferdinand Freiligrath, a talent of the first class, a powerful colourist, and gifted with great originality.

In another work, which I hope to finish, I shall be able to speak in detail of many German writers who were my contemporaries, and who are not mentioned in my book "On Germany." Therein I shall amply fill the empty places in this last work; and I pledge my word that neither the public nor the authors, with whom I at present have not occupied myself, will find aught missing which they have expected.

HEINRICH HEINE.

PARIS, *January* 15, 1855.

Digitized by Google

EXTRACT FROM THE FIRST EDITION OF THE FRENCH VERSION.

In the first three parts of this book I have spoken rather in detail of the wars between religion and philosophy in Germany, and it was my task to clearly set forth that spiritual revolution in my native land, regarding which Madame de Staël circulated so many errors. I candidly confess that I always had this book of the grandmother of the Doctrinaires before my eyes, and it was with a view to rectification that I gave mine the same title, "On Germany."

HEINRICH HEINE.

Paris, *April* 8, 1835.

Digitized by Google

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

I MUST beg the German reader to especially observe that these pages were originally written for a French publication, the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and for a special and then timely object. For they belong to a survey of German genius of the past, a part of which I had previously placed before the French public, and which had also appeared in German, as contributions to the history of the more recent literature of Germany. The demands of the periodical press, errors in its management, the want of requisite books and references, inadequate French aid, a law recently promulgated in Germany regarding foreign works which reached me alone, and similar hindrances, prevented me from publishing the different portions of the survey in question in chronological order, and under a common title. Therefore the

Digitized by Google

present work, in spite of its apparent internal unity and its external exclusiveness, is only the fragment of a greater whole.

I greet my home with a most friendly greeting.

HEINRICH HEINE.

Written in Paris, December 1834.

Digitized by Google

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

WHEN the first edition of this work appeared, and I examined a copy, I was not a little shocked at the mutilations and errors which appeared everywhere in it. Here an adjective was wanting, there a phrase in parenthesis, while whole passages were omitted without reference to the context, so that not only the general meaning, but very often all meaning whatever, had disappeared. It was far more the fear of Cæsar than that of God which had guided the hand of the censor in these excisions, for while everything which was politically suspicious had been carefully expunged, the most serious and doubtful references to religion had been passed over. The result was, that the real tendency or intent of the book, which was patriotic and democratic, was lost, and there glared at me in its place a grim, strange

Digitized by Google

spirit, suggestive of scholastic theologic cuffing and pummelling, such as is utterly repugnant to my humane and tolerant disposition.

I flattered myself that I could make it all right and fill up the gaps in a second edition; but no such restoration is now possible, because the manuscript perished in the house of my publisher, in the great fire of Hamburg.[1] My memory is too weak to aid me in the work, neither were my eyes in a fit condition for it. I therefore avail myself of the French version,-which was published before the German, to translate and replace the more important missing portions.

One of these passages which appeared in innumerable French newspapers, which was much discussed, and even cited by one of the greatest statesmen of France, Count Molé, in the Chamber of Deputies last year, is given at the end of this new edition, and it may show what relation it has to the depreciation and degradation of Germany, of which I, according to certain honourable men, have been guilty as to a foreign country. If I ever in my anger expressed myself plainly as to the old official Germany, the mouldy country of the Philistines (which has, however, produced

[1] It has been already mentioned that it was subsequently found and used for the edition from which this translation is taken.

Digitized by Google

no Goliath, and no one great man), then it was so twisted and turned as to make it appear as if I meant the real Germany itself, the great mysterious, or, as it were, the anonymous Germany of the German people—those sleeping sovereigns with whose sceptre and crown the monkeys are playing. Such insinuations were all the more easily conveyed, because during a long time any true expression of my opinions was simply impossible, especially during the decree of the Bundestag against "Young Germany," which was specially directed against me, and which put me into an exceptionally strained position, such as was unprecedented in the annals of oppression of the press. And when I at a later time succeeded in getting rid somewhat of the muzzle my thoughts were still clogged.

This book is a fragment, and a fragment it shall remain. I declare on my honour that I should be pleased if I could leave it unpublished. Since it appeared my views have changed as regards many things, especially religious matters, and much which I then asserted is totally at variance with my present opinions. But the arrow when it has left the bow-string no longer belongs to the archer, and the word is no longer in the control of him who spoke it when it has left his lips, and still more when it has been

Digitized by Google

multiplied by the press. And there are strict external claims upon me which I cannot control, and obligations which I must fulfil, as regards publishing this work, which render it impossible for me to suppress it. I could, indeed, as many authors would in such circumstances have done, take refuge in softening expressions and veiling phrases, but I hate from my very soul ambiguous words, hypocritical flowers of speech, cowardly fig-leaves.[1] But under all circumstances there always remains to an honourable man the inalienable right to candidly confess his faults, and I will here exercise the right without diffidence. I here candidly confess that everything in this book which relates to the great question of God is as false as it was foolish.[2] And just as irrational as false is the assertion which I repeated in the school, that Deism was theoretically doomed, and must for the future drag out a feeble life in the world of mere shams. No, it is not true that the critic of reason, which has conquered the fanatical advocates of proofs of the existence of God, as we have known them since Anselm of Canterbury, has also put an end to the existence

[1] *Die feigen Feigenblatter.* In England, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, the term *fico*, from the Italian, was equivalent to a reproach of cowardice. It still survives in the saying, "A fig for him," or "I would not give a fig for it."

[2] *Unbesonnen.* Heedless, rash, foolish without reflection.

Digitized by Google

of God Himself. For Deism lives—lives its most lively life; it is not dead, and least of all has it been killed by the last German philosophy. This cobweb Berlin dialectic cannot entice a dog out of the kitchen, or kill a cat, much less a God. I have personally experienced how little danger there is in their killing; they are always killing somebody, but their victims always *live*. The door-keeper of the Hegelian school, the grim Ruge, once declared stiff and strong, or rather strong and stiff, that he had knocked me dead in the Halle Annual, yet all the while I was running about the Boulevards of Paris, fresh and sound, and more immortal than ever. Poor, valiant Ruge! he himself could not refrain from the heartiest laughter, when I confessed to him, here in Paris, that I had never seen the terrible death-dealing sheets of the Halle Annual; and my rosy cheeks, as well as the excellent appetite with which I swallowed oysters, convinced him how little of a corpse there was in me. In fact, I was then still healthy and fat, yes, in the zenith of my fatness, and was as haughty as King Nebuchadnezzar before his fall.

Ah! a few years later there came a bodily and spiritual change. How often since then have I reflected on the history of that Babylonian monarch who held himself to be God, but

Digitized by Google

was cast down from the height of his delusion, crept like a beast in the field, and ate grass—it may have been salad.[1] In the great and glorious Book of Daniel lies the legend which I commend, not only to the excellent Ruge, but also to my still more deeply deluded friends, Marx, yea even unto Messieurs Feuerbach, Daümer, Bruno Bauer, Hengstenberg, and whatever else they may be called, these godless self-gods—for their edifying consideration. But there are also in the Bible many beautiful and remarkable narratives well worth their attention, as for instance in the very beginning, that of the forbidden tree in Paradise and the serpent, that little private professor who, six thousand years before Hegel was born, taught the whole Hegelian philosophy. This blue stocking without feet showed very shrewdly how the Absolute consisted of an identity of being and knowing[2] how man became God through knowledge, or, which is the same thing, how God in man first attained to knowledge of Himself. However, this formula is not so clear or intelligible as the original words: "If ye eat of the

[1] *Es wird wohl Salat gewesen sein.* This exclamation in this place perfectly expresses the full value of all Heine's deep "religious conviction."—*Translator.*

[2] *Sein und Wissen.* Existence and cognition, from the technology first developed by Kant and greatly enlarged by his followers.

Digitized by Google

tree of knowledge ye shall be as gods." Dame Eve only understood one thing in all the demonstration, that the fruit was forbidden, and therefore she, the good lady, because it was forbidden, of course ate it. But she had hardly devoured the enticing apple ere she lost her innocence, her naïve directness or simplicity; she found that she was too much undressed for a person of her position—she, the ancestral mother to be of so many future emperors and kings—and so she required a dress. Of course only a dress of fig-leaves, for in those days your silk-factories were as yet unborn, and Paradise was wanting in milliners and fashionable dressmakers. Oh, what a Paradise it was! Strange, that when woman comes to reflecting self-consciousness her first thought is a new dress! Truly this Biblical tale, and with it the speech of the serpent, are ever in my mind, and I would fain place it as motto to this book, just as one often sees before princely gardens a board with the warning: "Here are set man-traps and spring-guns."

I have already in my last work, the *Romancero*, spoken of the change which I have experienced as regards religious matters. Since then many questions inspired with Christian importunacy and intrusiveness have been addressed to me, asking how it was that a better light

Digitized by Google

came to me. Pious souls seemed to be yearning for me to reveal some miracle to them; they would fain know whether I did not, like Paul, see a light on the way to Damascus, or whether I had not, like Balaam the son of Beor, been riding a stubborn ass, who suddenly opened his mouth and began to speak like a man? No, ye pious, confiding souls, I never travelled to Damascus; I know nothing whatever about Damascus, save that the Jews who lived there were lately accused of eating old Capuchins. Nor would I perhaps have known the name of the city, had I not read the Canticles of King Solomon, in which the monarch compares the nose of his beloved to a tower which looketh forth towards Damascus. Nor did I ever see an ass—that is, a four-footed one who spoke like a man; though I have met men enough who, whenever they opened their mouths, spoke like asses. In fact, it was neither a vision, nor a seraphic rapture, nor a voice from heaven, or wonderful dream, or any such marvellous spiriting;[1] and I owe my enlightenment entirely and simply to reading an old simple book, as plain and modest as nature itself—yes, and quite as natural; a book which

[1] *Wunderspuk.* There's a suspicion of satire in this term which would be perfectly understood in Pennsylvania if one were to speak of a wonderful *spook*.

Digitized by Google

seems as week-day like and unpretending as the sun which warms us, or as the bread with which we are fed; a book which greets us with all the intimate confidence, the blessed affection, and kind glance of an old grandmother, who herself reads it every day with her dear, trembling lips, with the spectacles on her nose; and this book is, simply and briefly, the Bible. This is called with cause the Holy Scripture; he who has lost his God may find Him again in this book, and to him who has never known Him the breath of the divine word is wafted from it. The Jews, who are connoisseurs in costly things, knew very well what they were about when, in the conflagration of the Second Temple, they left the gold and silver vessels of sacrifice, the candelabras and lamps, and even the high-priest's breast-cloth, with its great jewels, to take care of themselves, and only rescued the Bible. This was the real treasure of the Temple, and it was not—God be praised!—a prey to the flames, or to Titus Vespasian, the evildoer who had such an evil end, as the Rabbis relate. A Jewish priest who lived during the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus at Jerusalem, and who was called Joshua ben Siras ben Eliezer, has expressed in *Meschalim*, a collection of gnomic sayings, the opinions of his time as to the Bible, and I will here cite his beautiful words. They

Digitized by Google

are sacerdotally solemn, and yet vigorous and refreshing as if they had but yesterday been uttered, and are as follows:—

"All of this is the Book of the Covenant made with the highest God, that is to say, the Law which Moses ordained for a treasure to the house of Jacob. From it wisdom has ever flown like unto the water of Pison when it is great, and the water of Tigris when it runs over in the time of Spring. From it understanding has run like the Euphrates when it is swollen, and like Jordan in the harvest. From it virtue burst forth like light, and like the water of the Nile at the ingathering of the harvest. He has never yet lived who learned it all, nor will he ever exist who can master all its wisdom, for its sense is deeper than any sea, and its word deeper than any abyss."

HEINRICH HEINE.

(Written in Paris in the month of joy (June) 1852.)

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE	v
THE GERMAN PUBLISHER'S PREFACE	xxi
AUTHOR'S PREFACE	xxvii
PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION	xxxv
PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION	xxxvii

GERMANY.

FIRST PART—

BOOK I. GERMANY TILL THE TIME OF LUTHER	1
„ II. FROM LUTHER TO KANT	68
„ III. FROM KANT TO HEGEL	132

SECOND PART—

THE ROMANTIC SCHOOL	225
PREFACE BY THE GERMAN PUBLISHER	227
AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION	229
PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION	235
BOOK I.	237
BOOK II.—CHAPTER I.	314
„ „ II.	341
„ „ III.	359
„ „ IV.	375

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

GERMANY.

FIRST PART.—BOOK FIRST.

GERMANY TILL THE TIME OF LUTHER.

THE French believed of late years that they had attained to an understanding of Germany when they had learned something of our literature. Yet by this they have only raised themselves from a condition of utter ignorance to simple superficiality; for the products of our literature will remain for them silent flowers, and the whole spirit of German thought a barren repulsive riddle, so long as they are ignorant of the significance and meaning of religion and philosophy in Germany.

By imparting, as is my object, some explanatory information on this subject, I believe that I shall undertake a useful work. This is for me no easy task. Firstly, it is necessary to avoid a technology of which the French are utterly ignorant. And

Digitized by Google

yet I have not so deeply sounded the subtleties of theology or metaphysics as to be able to formulise them simply and briefly to suit the requirements of the French public. I shall therefore treat only of the great questions which are discussed in German divinity and worldly wisdom, and I shall always take into due consideration the limit of my own powers of explanation, and those of comprehension in the French reader.

Great German philosophers, who may perhaps by accident cast a glance over these pages, will probably shrug their shoulders at the scantily abridged fashion of all which I here present. But they will kindly observe that what little I say is clearly and significantly expressed, while their own works are indeed very fundamental—immeasurably fundamental, very profound—stupendously profound, but just in the same proportion unintelligible. Of what use to the people are locked-up granaries if they have no key to them? The people hunger for knowledge, and thank me for the bit of spiritual truth which I honourably divide with them.

I do not think it is want of ability which restrains most German learned men from expressing themselves in a popular manner as to religion and philosophy. I believe it is a diffident fear of the results of their own thoughts, which they dare not put before the people. I have not this reserve;

Digitized by Google

I am not a learned man; I do not belong to the seven hundred sages of Germany. I stand with the great multitude before the gates of their wisdom, and if any truth slips through them and gets to me, that is enough. I write it nicely out on paper and hand it to the printer, who prints it, and then it belongs to all the world.

The religion in which we rejoice in Germany is Christianity. I shall therefore have to tell what Christianity is, how it became Roman Catholicism, how this passed over into Protestantism, and how from Protestantism proceeded German philosophy.[1]

And since I shall begin by discussing religion, I beg beforehand that all pious souls shall not for goodness-sake worry themselves. Fear nothing, pious souls; no profane jests shall pain your ears. Such are, however, still useful in Germany, where it is necessary to restrain for a while the power of religion. For we are there as yet where you were before the Revolution, when Christianity was in inseparable alliance with the old régime. The one could not be disturbed so long as the other exerted an influence on the multitude. Voltaire had to let his sharp laughter be heard ere Sanson

[1] In the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, as well as in the later French editions, there are paraphrases of the foregoing introduction, but which are inferior to it; nor do they contain anything which is not virtually included in it.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

could let his axe fall. Yet the laughter, like the axe, in reality proved nothing—they only worked practically. Voltaire could only wound the body of Christianity. All his jests drawn from Church history, all his witty sayings as to dogmatics and culture, on the Bible, the holiest book of mankind, on the Virgin Mary, the fairest flower of poetry, the whole dictionary of philosophic arrows which he shot freely against clergy and priests, only hurt the mortal body of Christianity, not its deeper spirit, not its immortal soul.

For Christianity is an idea, and as such indestructible and immortal, like every idea. But what is this idea?

It is just because this idea has not been clearly understood, and because externals have been mistaken for the reality, that there is as yet no history of Christianity. Two opposite parties write the history of the Church, and instantly contradict one another; but neither will ever distinctly express what that idea really is which forms the true centre of Christianity, and which strives to reveal itself in its symbolism, its dogma, as in its culture.[1] Neither Baronius, the Catholic cardinal, nor the Protestant court-councillor, Schröck, has

[1] *Kultus.* The true meaning of this disputed word is here the peculiar form which national spirit or character assumes in action, including its social, literary, and other developments.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

revealed to us what that idea really was. And though you should turn over all the folios of the acts of the councils, the Assemanic code of liturgies, and the whole *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Sacarelli, you would never learn from them what the idea of Christianity really was. What do you see, then, in the histories of the Oriental and Western Churches? Nothing but dogmatic subtleties, in which, in the one, the old Greek sophistry shows itself again, while in the Western you find only disputes on points of discipline concerning ecclesiastical interests, in which the old Roman legal casuistry and arts of government are revived with new formulas and means of enforcing them. In fact, just as people fought in Constantinople over the *Logos*, so they fought in Rome over the relative claims of secular and ecclesiastical power; and as they made feuds there as to ὁμουσιος, so they quarrelled here concerning investiture. But the Byzantine questions, Whether the Logos was ὁμουσιος to God the Father?—whether the Virgin Mary was one giving birth to God or man?—whether Christ, wanting food, hungered, or only felt hungry because he wished to do so?—all these questions had in the background mere court intrigues, whose settlement depended on what was whispered and giggled in the chambers of the sacred palace—*sacri palatii*—as, for instance, whether Eudoxia should fall or Pulcheria? for

Digitized by Google

this lady hated Nestorius, who had betrayed her amorous intrigues, and that one hated Cyrillus, who protected Pulcheria. All concentrated at last on mere intrigues or gossip of women and eunuchs, and in a dogma some individual (and in the individual some party) was persecuted or protected. Just so it was in the West. Rome would rule. "When its legions fell, it sent dogmas into its provinces;" every quarrel as to religion had at the bottom Roman usurpation, the main question being to consolidate the power of the head Roman bishop. This ruler was very easy indeed as to many matters of faith, but belched fire and flame when the rights of the Church were attacked. He did not dispute much as to the persons in Christ, but a great deal over the consequences of the Isidore Decretals.[1] He centralised his power by canon law, appointment of bishops, degradation of princely power, monastic orders, celibacy, and so forth. But was all this Christianity? Does the reading of all this history reveal to us the idea of Christianity? What is this idea?

How this idea developed itself historically, and manifested itself in the world of things visible,

[1] There is a very amusing chapter in the Chronicles of Rabelais as to the immense importance attached to these holy decretals, which were virtuall more revered than the Scriptures.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

may be easily perceived in the first century after Christ's birth, if we will, without prejudice, investigate the history of the Manichæans and Gnostics. Although the first have been declared heretics, and the last decried and damned by the Church, they still maintained an influence on the dogma; the art of the Church developed itself from their symbolism, and their manner of thinking penetrated the whole life of the Christian races. The Manichæans, as regards fundamental principles, are not very different from the Gnostics. The theory of two opposing, warring principles, good and bad, is common to both. The Manichæans derived this idea from the old Persian religion, in which Ormuzd, or Light, is opposed as an enemy to Ahriman, or Darkness. The true Gnostics placed more reliance on the pre-existence of the good principle, and explained the existence of the evil by emanation, by the generations of æons, who, the more remote they become from their origin, die the more degraded. According to Cerinthus, the creator of this our world was by no means the highest God, but only an emanation from him, one of the æons, the real demiurgus, who gradually became deteriorated, and who now, as the bad principle, stands as an enemy to the good principle, or Logos, directly sprung from the highest God. This Gnostic view of the world is most ancient Indian, and it involves the

Digitized by Google

doctrine of the incarnation of God, of the mortification of the flesh, of spiritual introversion,[1] and from these it developed the ascetic, contemplative, monkish life which is the most perfect blossom of the Christian idea. But this idea could only express itself in a very confused manner in dogmatics, and very sadly and gloomily in culture. Yet we see the doctrines of the two schools manifesting themselves everywhere; the evil Satan appears opposed to the good Christ; the world of the spirit is set forth by the latter, that of matter by Satan. Our soul belongs to one, our body to the other, and the whole world of phenomena or Nature is accordingly originally evil, and Satan, the prince of darkness, will allure us with it to destruction, and we must renounce all the sensuous joys of life or we must chasten and torment the body, which is a copyhold of Satan, so that the soul may the more easily soar upward into the light-bright heaven, the glorious kingdom of Christ.

This view of the world, the real idea of Christianity, spread with great rapidity over the whole Roman realm like an infectious disease, and the whole Middle Age endured its agonies, sometimes in the delirium of fever, and anon in death-like exhaustion, and we moderns still feel its cramps and debilities in our limbs. Even if one of us be

[1] *Insichselbstversenken*, the sinking into one's self, or seeking God and light in our own inner being.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

in health, he cannot escape the general lazar-house atmosphere, and he feels miserable as the only sound man among utter invalids. When it shall come to pass that mankind shall regain their perfect health, when peace shall be restored between body and soul and they blend again in their original harmony, then we shall hardly understand the artificial, unnatural strife which Christianity caused between them. Happier and more beautiful generations, who, begotten in free-choice[1] embraces, will flourish in a religion of joy and pleasure, will smile sadly at their poor ancestors, who, mournful and melancholy, abstained from all enjoyment of this beautiful world, and by mortifying and killing the warm, glowing, coloured sensuousness, almost wasted into cold spectres. Yes, I say it definitely, our descendants will be more beautiful and happier than we are. For I believe in progress, I believe that man was meant to be happy, and I have a higher opinion of Divinity than those pious people who think it only created humanity to make it suffer. I would beforehand, by the blessings of free political and industrial institutions, establish that happiness, which, according to the religious, will be first found in heaven on the day of judgment. True, the one may be as great a folly or as idle a hope

[1] *i.e.*, free-love.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

as the other, and perhaps there is to be no resurrection of humanity either in the politico-moral or in the apostolic-catholic sense. Humanity is perhaps meant for everlasting misery; races are perhaps to be damned for ever, trampled on by despots, bought and sold by their accomplices, and mocked by their lackeys. Ah! if this be so, we must strive to uphold Christianity, even if we believe it to be an error. Uphold it we must; one must go in the monkish cowl and barefoot over Europe, and preach the nothingness of all earthly goods or goodness and asceticism, and hold before flagellated and mocked men the consoling crucifix, and promise them—after death—all the seven heavens up there on high.

It is perhaps because the magnates of this world are so sure of their power, and have determined in their hearts to eternally abuse it, to our woe, that they are convinced of the necessity of Christianity for the people, and it is at bottom a tender feeling for humanity which makes them take such pains to maintain this religion.[1]

The final destiny of Christianity or the duration of religion depends on whether we need it. This religion was a benefit for suffering mankind for eighteen centuries; it was providential, divine, holy. All the benefits which it conferred on civilisation, by taming the strong and strengthen-

[1] This passage is wanting in the French version.

Digitized by Google

ing the weak, bound races together by the same feelings and a common language, and whatever else its apologists urge is all of small account in comparison to that greater comfort which it of itself conferred on mankind. Eternal renown is due to that symbol of a suffering God, the Saviour with a cross of thorns, the crucified Christ, whose blood was also the allaying balsam which ran down into the wounds of humanity. The poet will of all others recognise with awe and honour the terrible sublimity of this symbol. The whole system of symbols which express themselves in the art and life of the Middle Age will through all time awaken the amazed admiration of the artist. And indeed what a colossal result it had in Christian art, especially in architecture! How these Gothic cathedrals are in harmony with the general culture, and how the idea of the Church is revealed in them! Everything in them rises and soars, everything transforms itself; the stone sprouts in sprays, branches, and foliage, and becomes a tree, the fruit of the vine, and the branches become flesh and blood; man becomes God—God a pure spirit! Truly the Christian life in the Middle Age is an ever-fertile, inexhaustibly precious mass of material for the poet. Only Christianity could in this world cause conditions involving such bold contrasts, such varied sorrows, such startling beauties, that we might

Digitized by Google

suppose they had really never existed, and that all was a vast delirious dream, the fevered vision of a crazy god.[1] Nature herself seemed then to be fantastically disguised, and yet, though man, absorbed in abstract subtle investigation of trifles, turned away peevishly from her, she often roused him with a voice so shudderingly sweet, so terribly lovely, with such magic power, that he involuntarily listened and smiled, and was terrified, and even died of it. Here the story of the Nightingale of Basle occurs to me, and as you probably do not know it, I will tell it to you.

"In May 1433, at the time of the Council, a company of clergymen went walking in a grove near Basle, prelates and doctors, monks of every colour, and they disputed over theological controversies, and distinguished and argued, or quarrelled about annates, expectatives, and reservations, or debated whether Thomas of Aquinas was a greater philosopher than Bonaventura, for all I know! But all at once, in the midst of their dogmatic and abstract discussions, they stopped and stood as if rooted before a blooming linden-tree on which sat a nightingale, who exulted and

[1] A simile which Heine repeats several times in his works. It appears to have been suggested by the remark of Spinoza (*Trac. Polit.*), that God thinks worlds as man thinks thoughts. It is remarkable that Heine, however, represents this deity as drunk (*Reise Bilder, Pictures of Travel*, vol. i. "Ideas," chap. iii.), or insane, as in the present instance.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

sobbed in the softest and tenderest melodies. Then the learned men were strangely happy in their souls, the warm notes of spring rushed into their scholastic encloistered hearts, their feelings awoke as from a gloomy winter's sleep, they looked at one another with amazed delight, till one of them made the shrewd remark that there was something wrong in all this; that this nightingale might well be a devil; that this devil drew them with his charming sounds from their Christian discourse, and would fain invite them to lechery and similar sweet sins, and he began to exorcise, probably in the formula which was then used: *Adjuro te per eum, qui venturus est, judicare vivos et mortuos, et cetera.* It is said that at this conjuration the bird replied, 'Yes, I am an vile spirit,' and flew laughing away. But those who heard his song fell ill, it is said, that day, and soon after died."[1]

[1] It may interest many readers, and especially those who are extremely critical as to translations of Heine, to know how Heine himself translated, for which reason I give the original of this tale, as first told by Manlius, and repeated by Grosius in his *Magica, seu Mirabilium Historiarum de Spectris et Apparitionibus.* Islebiæ 1597. It occurs in several later works. Heine took his version from Kornmann, Temp. N.H. 1611.

"Docti quidam viri in Concilio Basiliensi animâ gratia in sylvulam egressi fuerant, ut amicè de controversiis illius temporis conferrent. Inter eundem aviculam in modum lusciniæ dulcissimè canentem audiunt: admirantur vocis dulcedinem, cujus sit avis cantus dubitant. Ingressi silvam, arbori insi-

Digitized by Google

This story needs no comment. It bears all the cruel impress of a time when everything which was sweet and lovely was cried down as devilish. Even the nightingale was slandered, and people crossed themselves when it sang. The true Chris-

---

dentem aviculam conspicantur, eamque citra remissionem quàm suavissimè canentem attentis omnes et animis et auribus auscultant. Tandem is, qui cæteris cordatior videri volebat, alloquitur his verbis aviculam: 'Adjuro te in nomine Christi, ut indices nobis, quis sis?' Respondit avicula: 'Se esse unam ex damnatis animabus, et destinatam esse ad eum locum, usque ad diem novissimum, et tunc supplicium æternum subeundum esse.' His dictis avolavit ex arbore, clamitans: '*O quam diuturna et immensa est æternitas!*' 'Judico fuisse Diabolum,' inquit Philippus Melanchthon, 'in illo loco habitantem.' Omnes verò qui huic adjurationi interfuerunt, vehementur ægrotare cœperunt, et paulò post sunt mortui. (*In Collectaneis Manlii.*)

It will be seen by this that the bird in question was not "an evil spirit" or devil, but an unfortunate condemned human soul, pouring forth its complaint in the wailing tones of the nightingale, even as of yore Philomela was supposed to lament her cruel fate. Friedrich gives several instances to prove (*Symbolik der Natur*, p. 513), that the song of the nightingale was anciently regarded everywhere as melancholy or mournful, "and of an edifying nature, referring to the changes of life and its loss" (*Untergang*). Nor does the unfortunate being fly away "laughing," but with the very impressive cry, "Oh, how lasting and vast is eternity!" That the monks all died is, I believe, a comment to the effect that they were punished for a want of pity and charity. As Heine tells the tale, its whole inner or true meaning is quite perverted. It appears to have been conceived by some heretic of the Middle Ages. Heine, however, ignorantly follows the Protestant Melanchthon in his half-understanding of it, and not the original.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

tian walked with agonised, reserved feelings, like an abstracted spectre here and there in blooming Nature. I may discuss this relation of the Christian to Nature in another book, and more fully, when I fundamentally treat of German popular beliefs in explanation of the new romantic literature. At present I can only remark that French authors, misled by German authorities, are all in error when they assume that these popular beliefs were the same during the Middle Age all over Europe. It was only as regarded the good principle, or the kingdom of Christ, that people held all over Europe the same views; the Roman Church took good care of that, and whoever differed from the prescribed opinion was a heretic. But in different countries there were different views as regards the evil principle and the kingdom of Satan, and in Germany they varied much from those of the Latin South.[1] This was caused by the fact that the Christian priesthood did not reject the old national gods whom they found existing, as if they were idle fancies, cobwebs of the brain, but allowed them a real existence as male and female devils, who had lost by the triumph of Christ their power

[1] *Romanischen Süden.* As here employed, *Romanisch* means neither Roman nor Romanesque nor Romantic, but Latin, as applied to the descendants of the ancient Latin-speaking races. —*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

over mankind, and who now strove by wanton smiles and wicked wiles to lead man into sin. All Olympus became an aërial fantastic hell,[1] and when a poet of the Middle Ages sang the history of the gods of Greece, however beautifully, the pious Christian saw in it all only spectres and devils. This gloomy delusion of the monks bore most bitterly on poor Venus, who passed specially for a daughter of Beelzebub, and the excellent knight Tannhüser said to her very face—

"O Venus, lovely lady mine,
Thou art a deviless!"

For she had allured Sir Tannhüser into that wondrous cave which is also called the Venusberg, of which the legend went that the beautiful goddess there led with her damsels and paramours, amid games and dances, the maddest, merriest life. Poor Diana, despite her chastity, was not safe from a similar fate, and she was made to hunt by night with her nymphs through the forests, whence the legend of the raging host of the Wild Hunt.[2]

---

[1] *Eine luftige Hölle*, "an airy hell." In the French version, "Tout l'Olympe était devenu un enfer dans l'espace."

[2] Popular legend as well as scientific folk-lore assign a very different origin to the Wild Hunt, whose leader, whether Odin, Rodenstein, or Hackelnberg, was certainly male and of Northern origin. Diana as Hecate was the dreaded queen of all the witches in classic times, as she is to-day in Italy, and the

Digitized by Google

Here the Gnostic view of the deterioration of that which was divine shows itself in all its fulness, and it was in this changing of the forms of earlier national faiths that the idea of Christianity manifests itself most profoundly and perfectly.

The national faith in Europe and in the North, far more than in the South, was pantheistic; its mysteries and symbols, were related to a worship of Nature. In every element man revered wondrous beings, in every tree breathed a divinity; the whole world of phenomena was deified throughout; but Christianity reversed the view, and in place of a deified Nature gave us one utterly bedevilled. But the gay and smiling images of Grecian gods, made more beautiful by art, which ruled with Roman culture in the South, could not be so easily changed into hideous and horrible satanic masques as the forms of German gods, which had of course been modelled by no artistic sense, and were, from the first, as grim and gloomy as the North itself. Therefore there could not be created by you in France any such darkling horrors of devildom as with us, and even demonology and witchcraft assumed with you a more cheerful form.

Christian Middle Ages added nothing to the nocturnal terrors with which she was anciently surrounded. In Europe, as in India, she was the Moon-cat who all night long hunted the star-mice. Heine is here quite in the right as to his principle, but very unfortunate in his illustrations. *Vide* notes to "the goddess Diana," with which this work ends.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

How beautiful, clear, and rich in colour are your legendary tales in comparison with ours—those monstrous abortions, which consist of blood and mist, and which grin at us so grisly and so grim! Our mediæval poets, who generally chose materials which had been first invented or worked up in Brittany and Normandy, gave, perhaps intentionally, as much as was possible of that cheerful old French spirit. But in our national poems and our oral popular tales there ever remained that dusky mystical Northern spirit, of which you have hardly an idea. You too have, like us, different kinds of elementary spirits, but they are as different from ours as a German is from a Frenchman. How clear, and especially how clean, are the demons in your fabliaux and romances of chivalry compared with our obscure, and often obscene, *canaille* of ghosts! Your fairies and elementary spirits, from whatever source derived, from Wales or Arabia, are at least naturalised, and a French ghost is as different from a German *Geist* as a dandy who lounges on the Boulevard Coblence differs from a German porter. Your water-nymphs—for instance, Melusina—differ from ours as much as a princess differs from a washerwoman. How the fairy Morgana would be frightened should she meet a German witch stark naked, smeared with ointment, riding on a broom to the Brocken! This mountain is no

Digitized by Google

charming Avalon, but a rendezvous for all that is hideous and horrible. On its summit sits Satan in the form of a black goat. Every witch approaches him with a candle in her hand, and kisses him behind where the back ends. After this ceremony the infamous sisterhood dance round him, and sing, "Donderemus! Donderemus!" The goat bleats, the infernal company[1] yell and hurrah. It is a bad omen for the witch who loses a shoe, for it is a sign that she will be burned during the year to come. But the mad music of the Sabbat, which is for all the world like that of Berlioz, drowns all painful forebodings, and when the poor witch awakes in the morning from her intoxication, she lies naked and weary in the ashes by the extinguished fire.[2]

[1] *Chahüt*, probably from *cajute*, a cabin; hence cabinet or select assembly. Hence the American "in cahoot."—*Translator.*

[2] In these passages Heine, to flatter his public, compares the higher class of early literary French romances with the lowest of later popular German witch-tales. But according to Prætorius (*Of Witch-Meetings in France*, p. 281, *Blockesberge*), Bodinus, Sprenger, and many other authorities, the witchcraft of France was precisely the same in every respect as that which is here described as peculiarly German. The witchcraft of the *Church*, which was so enormously developed by the Bull of Pope Innocent VIII., and which was based on a pact with the devil, was the same wherever the power of the Pope prevailed, and wherever the Catholic law, as laid down by the official *Malleus maleficarum* and Grillandus, was accepted. Italian witchcraft

Digitized by Google

The best information as to these witches is to be found in the *Daemonologie* of the strictly honourable and deeply learned Doctor Nicholas Remigius, the criminal judge of the Duke of Lorraine. This sagacious man had indeed the best of opportunities to learn the ways of witches, for he was "instructor" in their trials, and in his time, and in Lorraine alone, eight hundred women mounted the funeral pyre after being found guilty of sorcery.[1] The proof consisted generally in this: the hands and feet of the accused were tied, and then the victim was thrown into the water. If she sank and was drowned, she was innocent; if she floated, she was held to be guilty, and burned alive. Such was the logic of that time.

As a fundamental trait in the character of German demons, we see that everything ideal has

as described by Pico Mirandola in "La Strega," is in every detail identical with that depicted by Heine. The real motive of the witch persecution was to suppress heresy, and nine-tenths of all that was known about witchcraft and its horrors came from the Church, and was disseminated by it all over the world (Horst).

[1] The words of Remigius on this subject are:—"I have been for sixteen years a judge of witches. I have with my helpers during this time convicted eight hundred *wizards and witches*, and burned them in honour of God."—Remigii, *Dæmonolatria*, 1st part, xv. p. 74 (not *Dämonologie*, as Heine gives it). This work is full of information, but far superior to it is the *Dämonomagie* of Georg Christian Horst (Frankfurt-a-M., 1818), a book of genius written in a singularly liberal spirit for its time. —*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

been stripped from them, and what is vulgar and horrible is intimately mingled in their nature The more coarsely familiar they are in approaching us, the more horrible is the effect. Nothing is so uncanny as our knocking spirits, goblins, and brownies. Prætorius in his *Anthropodemus Plutonicus* has in this relation a passage which I here copy from Dobeneck.[1]

"The ancients had no other opinion as to noisy spirits than that they were really human beings in the form of little children with parti-coloured short frock or garment. Some add to this that they sometimes have a knife in their backs, sometimes something else, according to whatever instrument it was with which they were slain, which is full grim and grisly to behold. For superstitious people think they are the souls of those who have been murdered in the house. And they gossip many tales, as that when the goblins have done good service for a while, they made themselves so beloved that their friends have earnestly desired to see them, and begged it; to which the noise-spirits never willingly assented, declaring

[1] The *Anthropodemus* is a work of nearly 1300 pages, devoted to descriptions of all kinds of marvellous beings. It will be found fully discussed in another chapter. That of Friedrich L. F. von Dobeneck is entitled *Des Deutschen Mittelalters Volksglauben und Heroensagen*, Berlin, 1815. Its author also makes great use of Prætorius.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

that no one could behold them without being horrified. Yet when it so came that these girls would not forego their curiosity, the goblins mentioned a place in the house where they might be seen in person, but told them they must have ready a pail of cold water. And what happened was that a goblin showed himself on the ground, lying naked on a cushion with a great murderous knife sticking in his back. At which many a maid was so much frightened as to faint. Whereupon the Thing jumped up, seized the water, and dashed it over the girl, so that she came to herself. Whereupon the girls lost their yearning, and never more desired to see dear Chimmy.[1] The goblins have all names of their own, but are generally called Chim. And when they are well inclined to the men or women servants, they do for them all their housework, curry and feed the horses, clean out the stables, scour up everything, and attend to everything in the house, and under their care the cattle thrive and grow. For this the goblin must be caressed by the house-folk; he must not be annoyed in the least, either by being laughed

[1] In Prætorius, *Court Chimgen, i.e.* Chimchen. Heine speaks of all this as German, but in Tuscany the peasantry still believe in household goblins, who play all kinds of tricks on the servant-maids, yet do all their work for them. The chief of these is called Dusio.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

at or neglected as to food. If, for instance, a cook has once taken one of them into the house as her secret assistant, she must every day bring for him, to a certain place, at a certain time, his dishful of good victuals, and then go her way; after that she may idle about and go to bed early; in the morning she will find all her work properly done. But should she once neglect her duty or forget to prepare his food, she will have to do all her own work and have all kinds of mishaps, so that she will scald herself with hot water, break pots and pans, or upset the cooking, which ends in being scolded out of doors by the mistress or master—at which the goblin has often enough been heard to snigger or laugh. Such goblins always remain in a house, though the servants be changed. Yes, and a maid on going away will commend her goblin, and give him a good character to the one succeeding her, so that he may wait on the next in turn. And if she did not follow instructions, she had no end of bad luck, and ere long must herself leave."

The following short story is perhaps one of the grimmest of these tales.

"A servant-maid had for many years an invisible brownie, who would sit by her on the hearth, where she had cleared away his own little place for him, and where they talked together during the long winter evenings. Once she begged Heinz-

Digitized by Google

chen, or Harry, as he was called, to let her see him in his natural form, but Heinzchen always refused to do so. But at last he consented, and said if she would go into the cellar he would be visible. Then the girl took a candle, went down into the cellar, and there she saw a dead babe floating in an open barrel of blood. The girl had many years before given birth to an illegitimate child, killed it, and hidden the corpse in a barrel."

However, the Germans, as they are, often find their best merriment in the terrible, and their popular tales of goblins often abound in delightful incidents. Especially amusing are the stories of Hüdeken, a *kobold* who had his being in the twelfth century at Hildesheim, of whom much is still told in spinning-circles and in ghost-stories. A frequently published passage from an old chronicle narrates of him the following:—

"In the year 1132 there appeared an evil spirit for a long time unto many men in the bishopric of Hildesheim, and it was in the form of a peasant with a hat on his head; wherefore the peasants in their Saxon tongue called him Hüdeken (Hoodkin, or Little Cap). This spirit took pleasure in the company of men, to whom he revealed himself visibly or invisibly, asking or answering questions. He abused no one without cause; but if any one laughed at or abused him,

Digitized by Google

he repaid the injustice received with full measure.[1] When Count Burchard de Luka (Burcardus von Luca—*Prætorius*) was murdered by Count Hermann von Wiesenburg, and the lands of the latter were in danger, Hüdeken awoke the Bishop Bernard von Hildesheim from his sleep, saying, 'Arise, thou bald-head! the county of Wiesenburg is abandoned and void by murder, and thou mayst easily occupy it.' So the bishop assembled his armed men, attacked the domain of the guilty Count, and annexed it, with the assent of the Emperor, to his own bishopric.

"This spirit often warned the said bishop, all unsought, of coming danger. He showed himself many times in the court-kitchen, where he talked with the cooks, and did them much good service; and as they gradually became familiar with Hüdeken, a kitchen-boy ventured, when he appeared, to jeer him and throw dirty water on him. The spirit begged the head-cook or master of the kitchen to restrain the boy from his impudence, to which the master-cook replied, 'Thou art a spirit, and yet art afraid of a boy!' To which Hüdeken replied, threateningly, 'Since

[1] In the French version of this work Heine says, "J'emprunte à la chronique du cloitre de Hirschgau par l'Abbé Trithéme le passage suivant." It is given in the *Anthropodemus* of Prætorius after the foregoing remarks on goblins; but Heine follows the old text.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

you will not punish the boy, I will show you within a few days whether I fear him.' And it came to pass soon after that the boy who had abused the spirit sat sleeping alone one evening in the kitchen. Thereupon the goblin seized and strangled him, tore him to pieces, and put them in the pots upon the fire to boil. When the cook found out this freak, he cursed the spirit, and then Hüdeken next day spoiled all the roasts which were upon the spits with the blood and poison of toads, which he cast over them. Revenge caused the cook to curse him again, for which the spirit cast him over a sham enchanted bridge into a deep ditch.[1]

"It was his wont to go the rounds every night on the walls and towers, and compel the guards to keep good watch. A man who had a faithless wife, once before he went a-journeying said in jest to Hüdeken, 'Good spirit, I now commend to thee my wife; guard her well.' As soon as he had gone, the adulterous dame let all her lovers come, one after the other. But Hüdeken kept them from her, and threw them all out of bed on the floor. When the man came back from his journey, Hüdeken approached him from afar, crying out unto him, 'I rejoice in thy return,

[1] That is, he produced by glamour or illusive magic the appearance of a bridge, over which the cook was induced to pass.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

because I am freed from the dire duty with which thou didst charge me. Truly, I have with terrible trouble kept thy wife from actual adultery, but give me no more such work, for verily I had rather take care of all the pigs in all Saxony than of a woman who, by wiles and tricks, seeks the embraces of her lovers.'"

For accuracy's sake, I must observe that Hüdeken's head-covering differs from the common costume of the goblins. These are generally clad in grey, and wear a red cap. At least, it is so in Denmark, where they are at present most numerous.[1] I was once of the opinion that these kobolds liked living in Denmark because they were so fond of red groats;[2] but a young Danish poet, Mr. Andersen, whom I had the pleasure to know this summer here in Paris, has expressly assured me that the Nissen, as kobolds are called in Denmark,

[1] More so in Northern Italy, where the red-capped mannikin who can bestow treasures is generally believed in by the *contadini*. He is here unquestionably derived from the very ancient Picus or Picumnus, a goblin-god, who was the personified red-headed woodpecker (Preller, *Rom. Mythologie*). This bird revealed treasures and his red head suggested the cap. These red-capped goblins occur in Roman art. They extended to Scandinavia, and thence to the Algonkin Indians of America. *Vide* "Algonkin Legends of New England," by Charles G. Leland.—*Translator.*

[2] *Rothe Grütze*, grits or barley-groats. The Danes are continually rallied by the Germans in regard to their eating this dish.

Digitized by Google

prefer to everything else porridge, or mush, and butter. When they are once settled in a house, they have little will to leave it. However, they never come unannounced; and when they wish to dwell in any place, they forewarn the master in this fashion. They bear by night many chips of wood into the house and put cattle-dung into the milk-pots. Should the master of the house neglect to cast out the chips, or should the family drink the defiled milk, then the goblins always remain. A poor Jutlander was once so much annoyed by the society of such a kobold that he resolved to give up his house, and so put his "sticks"[1] on a waggon, and so went to the next village to settle. But on the route, looking behind him, he saw peering out of a barrel the red-capped head of the goblin, who cried out in a friendly tone, *Wi flütten* ("We're moving—we flit").

I have perhaps delayed too long over these little demons, and it is time that I go to the great ones; but all these stories illustrate the beliefs and character of the German people. In bygone centuries this faith was as powerful as that in the Church. When the learned Dr. Remigius had finished his great book on witchcraft, he thought he knew his subject so well that he too could

[1] *Siebensachen*, "seven things," a small mixed lot of furniture and household goods; generally used in a deprecatory sense. It corresponds to the English "few sticks."—*Translator*.

Digitized by Google

bewitch, and being a conscientious man, gave himself up to justice as a wizard, and as a wizard he was burnt alive.

These horrors did not originate directly in the Catholic Church, but indirectly in this, that it so craftily and meanly manipulated the old German national religion as to change its pantheistic view of the world into a pandemonic, and turned all the early saints of the people into devils. But man does not willingly abandon what was dear to him and to his forefathers, and deep feelings cling as with iron clamps to us even after they have been distorted and defaced. Therefore, this old disfigured and transformed popular faith held its own, perhaps longer than Christianity, in Germany, which latter did not take such deep root in its nationality. In the time of the Reformation, the belief in Catholic legends very soon disappeared, but not that in magic and witchcraft.

Luther did not believe in the marvels of the Church, but he had firm faith in devilry. His "Table-Talk" is full of curious tales of satanic devices, goblins, and witches. He himself, in his trials, often believed that he contended with the "God-be-with-us" in person.[1] On the Wartburg, while he was translating the New Testament, he

[1] "Er glaubte manchmal mit dem liebhaftigen Gott-sei-bei-uns zu kämpfen." That is to say, the devil who calls forth such exclamation.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

was so disturbed by the devil that he threw his inkstand at his head. Ever since that time the devil has had a great horror of ink, especially printer's ink. In the "Table-Talk" referred to there are many delightful bits relative to the craftiness of the devil, and I cannot refrain from giving one.

"Dr. Martin Luther relates that once some jolly companions were drinking together in a tavern, and there was one, a wild, profligate fellow. He had said if any one would give him a good treat of wine, he would sell his very soul for it.

"Soon after there came into the room a man who sat down and drank with him, and said, among other things, to this man who had been so daring—

"'Hear! thou didst say just now that if any one would give thee a good treat of wine, thou wouldst give him thy soul.'

"'That I will,' repeated the fellow, 'if I can only rollick and frolic and be jolly to-day.'[1]

"The man, who was the devil, said 'Yes,' and he soon after disappeared. And when that carouser had been gay all day, and at last was roaring drunk, there came that same man—the devil—who sat down opposite to him, and questioned the other pot-companions and said—

[1] "Ja ich will's thun, lass mich heute recht schlemmen, demmen und guter Dinge sein."

Digitized by Google

"'Good fellows! what think ye? Suppose a man buys a horse, do the saddle and bridle also belong to him or not?'

"At this all were terrified. Then the man spoke again—

"'Come, say it out quickly!'

"Then they roused up and said—

"'Yes, he should have the saddle and bridle with it.'

"Then the devil caught up the wild rough rowdy, and flew with him through the roof, but so that no one ever knew what had become of him."

Though I have the greatest respect for our great Martin Luther, it seems to me that he quite misunderstood the character of Satan; for the latter certainly does not think of the body with such contempt as this tale intimates. Whatever evil one may say of the devil, he cannot be accused of being a Spiritualist.

But Luther misunderstood the sentiments of the Pope and of the Catholic Church even more than he did those of the devil. According to my strict impartiality I must defend both, as well the devil against this too zealous man. In fact, if I am put upon my conscience, I must confess that Pope Leo was really much more sensible than Luther, and that the latter did not at all understand the fundamental principles of the Catholic Church. For Luther did not compre-

Digitized by Google

hend that the idea of Christianity, the utter destruction of Sensualism, was altogether too much in contradiction to human nature to be ever perfectly realised in life; he had not comprehended that Catholicism was a compromise between God and the devil—that is, between spirit and matter, by which the autocracy of the spirit was theoretically declared, but the material element placed in such condition that it could practically exercise all its annulled rights. Hence the shrewd system of confession which the Church invented for the benefit of the senses, though always according to forms which discredit every act of sensuality, and secure to the spirit its arrogant usurpation. You may yield to the tender impulses of the heart and embrace a pretty girl, but you must confess that it is a shameful sin, and for this sin there must be atonement. That this atonement could be settled by paying money, was as great a benefit for humanity as it was profitable for the Church. The Church had, so to speak, a fine or settled price for every carnal indulgence; hence a tax for all sorts of sins, and there were holy pedlars who, in the name of the Roman Church, retailed indulgences for every rated sin all over the land. Such a one was Tetzel, whom Luther first attacked. Our historians think that this protest against the sale of indulgences was a trifling

Digitized by Google

event, and that it was only through Roman obstinacy that Luther, who at first only fought against a clerical abuse, was urged thereby to attack the entire authority of the Church, even to its topmost summit. But that is an error; the traffic in indulgences was no misuse or abuse; it was a necessary consequence of the whole Church system, and by attacking it, Luther attacked the Church itself, and it was obliged to condemn him as a heretic. Leo X., the refined Florentine, the pupil of Politian, the friend of Raphael, the Greek philosopher with the triple crown which the Council conferred on him, perhaps because he suffered from a malady which certainly was not caused by Christian abstinence, and which was in those days very dangerous—Leo de' Medicis, how he must have smiled at the poor, chaste, simple monk, who fancied that the Gospel was the chart of Christendom, and that this chart must be true! Perhaps he never really knew or cared to know what Luther wanted, so occupied was he with the building the Church of St. Peter, the expense of which was to be defrayed by the sale of indulgences, so that it was really built by sin, and was a monument of lust—like that pyramid which an Egyptian harlot erected with the money which she had earned by prostitution. It might indeed be said much more truly of this church

Digitized by Google

than of the Cathedral of Cologne, that it was built by the devil. This triumph of Spiritualism, that sensuality itself should build for it its most beautiful temple, and that from confessions of fleshly sins the means were drawn to glorify the spirit, was not understood in the German North. For here, far sooner than under the glowing sky of Italy, was it possible to practise a Christianity which made the very least concession to sensuality. We of the North are of colder blood, and did not need so many indulgences for fleshly sins as the paternal Leo supplied us with. The climate aids us very much in practising Christian virtues, and on the 31st of October 1516, when Luther nailed his thesis on the door of the Augustine church, perhaps the moat of Wittenberg was frozen, and people could skate on it; which being a very cold pleasure, is consequently not a sin.

I have perhaps, in the foregoing remarks, used the words Spiritualism and Sensualism, but they do not relate here, as with the French philosophers, to the two different sources of our knowledge. I use them much more, as must appear from the meaning of my remarks, to indicate those two different methods of thought, of which one will exalt the spirit by seeking to annihilate matter, while the other seeks to vindicate the natural rights of matter against the usurpations of the spirit.[1]

[1] This passage is thus given in the French version of Heine's

Digitized by Google

I call especial attention to the foregoing beginning of the Lutheran Reformation, which reveals its whole spirit, because here in France the old misunderstandings still prevail as to the Reformation which Bossuet has disseminated in his *Histoire des Variations,* and which are even current among German writers.[1] The French have only understood the negative side of our Reformation; they saw in it only a strife against Catholicism, and often thought it was the same battle, on the same grounds, as in France. But the motives were radically different. The struggle

works :—"Je viens me servir des mots *spiritualisme* et *sensualisme.* Je les expliquerai plus tard, quand je parlerai de la philosophie allemande. Il me suffit ici de faire observer que je n'emploie pas ces expressions en vue de systèmes philosophiques, mais seulement pour distinguer deux systèmes sociaux, dont l'un, le spiritualisme, est basé sur le principe qu'il faut annuler toutes les prétentions des sens pour donner la domination entière à l'esprit, qu'il faut mortifier, flétrir, écraser notre chair pour glorifier d'autant plus notre âme, pendant que l'autre système, le sensualisme, revendique les droits de la chair, qu'on ne devrait et qu'on ne pourrait pas annuler."

[1] This passage is also given with some variation in the first French edition (*Revue des Deux Mondes*), and with yet another change in the edition of Calmann Levy, Paris, 1884. The only passage of any consequence in these French versions is the following :—"Les commencements de la réforme révèlent déjà toute sa portée. Aucun Français n'a encore compris la signification de ce grand fait. Les idées plus erronées règnent en France au sujet de la réforme; et je dois ajouter que ces idées empêcheront peut-être les Français d'arriver jamais à une juste appréciation de la vie allemande."

Digitized by Google

against Catholicism in Germany was simply a war which Spiritualism began when it perceived that it only bore the title of supremacy and only ruled *de jure*, while Sensualism, by means of long-transmitted trickery, exercised the real power and ruled *de facto*. The pardon-pedlars were driven away, the pretty concubines of priests were changed for cold legitimate wives, the charming images of Madonnas were broken, while here and there sprung up the most ascetic Puritanism. The war against Catholicism in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was, on the contrary, a strife which was begun by Sensualism when it saw that it ruled *de facto*, and yet that every act of its government was scorned as illegitimate by Spiritualism, which claimed to rule *de jure*, these acts being most cruelly reviled. Instead of battling, as in Germany, with moral earnestness, they fought in France with licentious jests; instead of disputing theologically, they composed gay satires. The subjects of these were generally the contradictions in which man is involved when he will be all soul, and so there flourished rankly the most delightful tales of pious men who involuntarily succumbed to their animal instincts, or who, to preserve the appearance of holiness, took refuge in hypocrisy. The Queen of Navarre had long before depicted in her novels such contradictions and indecorums; her common theme is the relation of priests to

Digitized by Google

women, as if she would not only make us burst with laughter, but explode all monkhood at the same time.[1] The most piquant and malicious product of this humorous polemic is unquestionably the Tartuffe of Molière; for it is not only directed against the Jesuitism of his time, but against Christianity itself—yes, even against the idea of Christianity or Spiritualism. When Tartuffe sees the bare bosom of Dorine, he exclaims with affected grief and anxiety—

"Le ciel défend, de vrai, certains contentements,
Mais on trouve avec lui des accomodements."[2]

By this there is gaily satirised not only common hypocrisy, and the general falsehood which necessarily results from the impracticability of the Christian idea, but the whole system of concessions which Spiritualism must make to Sensuality. In fact, Jansenism had much more reason to complain of being wounded in its feelings than had Jesuitism by the representation of Tartuffe, and Molière should make the Methodists of to-day feel quite as uncomfortable as he did the Catholic devout

[1] "Und sie will als dann nicht blass unser Zwerchfell, sondern auch das Monchsthum erschüttern." This passage is omitted in the French version. A large proportion of the *Cent Nouvelles* is devoted to such tales of priests. But Heine quite forgets that of all this jocose satirical literature originated in Italy.

[2] "Certain delights Heaven to us denies,
But we can make with it a compromise."
—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

of his own times. And it is this which makes Molière so great, that he, like Aristophanes and Cervantes, jested not only with temporal events and chances, but the eternally laughable weaknesses of humanity. Voltaire, who always attacked only contemporary and immaterial topics, is in this respect greatly his inferior.

But Voltairean persiflage or mockery has fulfilled its mission in France, and to carry it further would be as untimely as unwise. For if we were to destroy the last visible remains of Catholicism, it might easily happen that its idea might assume a new form and put on a new body, even renouncing the very name of Christianity, and in this changed state could be more vexatious and burdensome than in its present broken, ruined, and generally discredited condition. Yes, it has its advantages, that Spiritualism is represented by a religion and a priesthood, the first of which has lost its early vigour, while the last stands in direct opposition to the whole enthusiasm for freedom of this our time.

But why is Spiritualism then so repulsive to us? Is there anything in it, then, which is so bad? Not at all. Attar of roses is a precious thing, and a phial of it is stimulating and delightful, especially to those who pass their days shut up in a harem. Yet, for all that, we would not have all the roses of life trampled and pressed to get a

Digitized by Google

few drops of the extract, however delightful and stimulating they might be. We are far more like nightingales, who are enraptured by the rose itself, and quite as blest by seeing its blooming blushes as by its unseen perfume.

I have before declared that it was really Spiritualism which attacked Catholicism among us; but this is only true as regards the beginning of the Reformation, for as soon as Spiritualism had made a breach in the old Church edifice, Sensuality came bursting out of it with all its long-restrained fire and fervency, and Germany became the wildest war-field of intoxication of freedom and sensual pleasure. The oppressed peasants found in the new doctrines weapons wherewith to carry on the war with aristocracy, and there had been a longing for such a war for a century and a half. In Munster, Sensuality ran naked through the streets in the form of Jan von Leyden, who slept with his twelve wives in the great bedstead which is still to be seen in the town-hall. The cloister gates wide open flew everywhere, and nuns and priests rushed into mutual embraces, billing and cooing.[1]

[1] *Schnäbeln*, to bill, *i.e.*, to kiss. Heine speaks of such amours as Protestant novelties, but there is the most abundant Roman Catholic testimony proving that down to the Reformation a priest who did not keep a concubine was a great exception, either in Italy or Germany. It was Protestantism which taught and inspired such morality as is now found in the Catholicism.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

Yes, the public history of that time consists almost entirely of simply sensual outbursts. We shall see anon how little of it remained in results, how Spiritualism again repressed these rebels, how it step by step strengthened its rule in the North, and finally got its mortal wound from an enemy, Philosophy, which, however, it had nurtured in its own bosom. It is a very complicated and confused affair, hard to disentangle. It is easy enough here for the Catholic party in turn to attribute the worst intentions to these reformers, and, according to them, it was inspired by a desire to render legal the most outrageous debauchery and plunder the Church. Certainly, spiritual interests must always form an alliance with the material to conquer; but in this game the devil had so mixed the cards, that there is nothing certain as to what were the real objects of any one.

The distinguished personages who in the year 1521 were assembled in the Imperial hall at Worms[1] may well have had many thoughts in their hearts which were in contradiction with their words. There sat a young Emperor, who, in all the joy of youthful delight in power, wrapped himself in his new purple mantle, and secretly rejoiced that the proud Roman, who had

[1] In the French version the date is given more accurately: "Les personages illustres qui s'étaient rassemblés, le 17 avril 1521, à Worms dans la grande salle de la Diete."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

so often treated right rudely his predecessors in the realm, and had not even yet renounced his pretensions, had now found some one who would set them seriously to rights. The representative of that Roman had on his side the inner delight of reflecting that here was a cause of discord among these Germans, who had, like drunken barbarians, so often invaded and plundered beautiful Italy, and who still threatened it with new attacks and rapine.[1] The lofty prelates were already turning it over in their minds whether they should marry their cooks, and so provide legitimate descendants to inherit their electorates, bishoprics, and abbeys. The minor officers of cities rejoiced in a possible new extension of their freedom. Everybody present had something to make, and was privately thinking of practical profits.

Yet there was one man there who, I am convinced, was not thinking of himself, but of the divine interests which he represented. This man was Martin Luther, the poor monk whom Providence had chosen to break that Roman world-power against which the most powerful emperors and boldest sages had fought in vain. But Providence knew very well on what kind of shoulders

[1] The French version has here the following passage, not given in German: "Les princes temporels se rejouissaient de pouvoir mettre la main sur les biens de l'Église au moyen des idées que répandait la nouvelle doctrine."

Digitized by Google

it had laid this burden. What was wanting here was not only a spiritual, but also a physical strength. A body trained by cloistral severity and chastity with a constitution of steel was needed to endure the bitter trials of such a mission. Yet at this time our dear master was lean and very pale, so that the rosy, well-fed gentlemen of the Diet looked almost with pity on the pitiable man in the black cowl. But he was right vigorous and healthy; his nerves were so firm that the brilliant tumultitude did not in the least overawe him,[1] and even his lungs must have been very strong. For after he had delivered his long defence, he was obliged, because the Emperor did not understand High German, to repeat it in Latin. I am always vexed when I recall this, for our dear master stood by an open window in a full draught of air while the sweat fell from his forehead. He must have been tired enough, and no doubt his throat was parched; and "he must have been very dry," thought the Duke of Brunswick—at least we read that he at once sent to Martin Luther from his hostelry three *kanne* of the best Eimbeck beer.[2] I shall never forget this noble trait of the House of Brunswick.

[1] The French version adds to this "et ses poumons devaient être d'une grande force."

[2] A *kanne* was something more than an imperial English quart, or about three pints.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

There are in France as false ideas of the hero of the Reformation as of the Reformation itself. The main cause of this misunderstanding really is that Luther is not only the greatest, but the *Germanest* man in our history; and as in his character all the virtues and weak points of Germans are united in the grandest manner, so he represented personally our strange Germany. For he had peculiar traits, such as we seldom find united, and which we generally regard as utterly contradictory. He was equally a dreamy mystic and yet a practical man. His thoughts had hands as well as wings; he spoke and acted; he was not only the tongue, but the sword of his time. And he was at once a cool scholastic picker and sifter of words and an inspired God-intoxicated[1] prophet. When he had worked himself weary all day long with his dogmatic distinctions, he in the evening took his flute, and, while looking at the stars, melted away in melody and pious reverie. This man, who could scold like a fishwife, could also be as gentle as a tender maid. He was often wild as the storm which roots up oaks, and then soft as the zephyr playing with violets. He was filled with the most terrible fear of God and a sense of sacrifice to the Holy Ghost; he could

[1] *Gottberauschter.* I think it was Novalis (F. von Hardenburg) who first used this expression, in reference to Spinoza.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

lose himself in the depths of pure spirituality, and yet he knew full well the glories of this world and their worth, and from his mouth came the far-famed saying—

"Who loves not woman, wine, and song,
Remains a fool his whole life long." [1]

He was, I may say, a complete man, an absolute man, in whom spirit and matter were not divided. Therefore it would be as wrong to call him a Spiritualist as a Sensualist. How shall I express it?—there was in him something of an underived original, incomprehensible miraculous, such as we find in all providential men; [2] something terribly naïf, clumsily-clever, sublimely narrow-minded, unconquerably dæmonic.

[1] In the French edition this is given as follows:—

"Wer liebt nicht Wein, *Weiber* und Gesang,
Der bleibt ein Narr sein Lebenlang."

That is to say, *women* is substituted for *woman*, which spoils not only the moral, but also the metre of the original. In his own German text Heine says that this "blossomed (*erblühte*) from the mouth of Luther." This singular simile, by which the great reformer is made to appear as a flower-pot, was changed in French to *est tombé*, or "fell from."—*Translator.*

[2] *Providentielle Männer*, men created by Providence for great special emergencies. "Unconquerably dæmonic," or *Unbezwingbar-dæmonisches*, appears to have been beyond Heine's French resources, as it does not appear in the Paris version. Goethe uses the term in reference to the young Duke of Weimar, and that as if it were original with him. The dæmon of Socrates was simply his own original genius.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

Luther's father was a miner in Mannsfeld, and there the boy often descended with him to the subterranean laboratory where mighty metals grew and first-born fountains ran, and there it may be that his young heart, all unconscious, took in the deepest secrets of Nature, or was fairied or bewitched by the elves of the mountain. Hence it came too, perhaps, that so much earthy stuff, so much of the dross or slag of human passion, stuck to him, with which he has been continually reproached. But he was wronged therein; for without that mingling of earth he would never have been a man of deeds. Pure souls cannot *act*. Do we not learn from Jung Stilling's spectre-lore that spirits can manifest themselves visibly in full colour with perfect distinctness, and are able to walk, run, dance, and do all things to sight like human beings, but can effect nothing material, nor so much as move the lightest toilet-table from its place?

Glory to Luther! glory to the valiant, valued man to whom we owe the rescue of our most precious possessions, and by whose benefits we now exist. It little becomes us to bewail his narrow views. The dwarf who stands upon the giant's shoulders can, of course, see farther than the giant himself, especially with spectacles; but to this elevated view is wanting elevation of feeling, or the giant heart which we cannot make our own. Still

Digitized by Google

less does it become us to pass sentence on his failings; these faults have profited us more than the virtues of a thousand others. The refined subtlety of Erasmus and the mildness of Melanchthon would never have brought us so far as the godlike brutality of Brother Martin often did. Yes, his faults, which I have pointed out, have borne the most precious fruit—fruit by which all mankind has been refreshed. From that day of the Diet, when Luther denied the authority of the Pope, and openly declared "that his doctrines must be refuted by texts from the Bible itself or upon reasonable grounds," there began a new era in Germany. The chain with which St. Boniface had fettered the German Church to Rome was severed. This Church, which had been previously an integral part of the great hierarchy, crumbled away and divided into religious democracies. The religion itself changed its nature, the Indian-Gnostic element disappeared, and we see how the Judaic-deistic principle is rising in it. Evangelical Christianity is being developed. And as the most needed demands of matter are not only considered but made legitimate, religion becomes once more a truth. The priest becomes human and takes a wife and begets children as God ordained. On the other hand, God himself becomes a celestial old bachelor without family, the legitimacy of his son is contested, the saints are obliged

Digitized by Google

to resign, the wings of the angels are clipped, the mother of God loses all claim to the heavenly crown, and she is forbidden to work miracles.[1] And it may be observed that since that time, and especially since natural science has made such progress, miracles have ceased. Whether it be that the Lord does not like to have the doctors watch his fingering so closely, or that he will not enter into competition with Bosco, certain it is that in these later days, though religion is in such danger, he has disdained to help it by a brilliant miracle. Perhaps he intends in future to exclude all holy tricks from all the new religions which he may introduce here on earth, and prove the truths of the new doctrines, always by reason—which is indeed the most reasonable way. At least, there has been no miracle manifested by Saint-Simonism, which is the newest faith, unless it be that the tailor's bill which Saint Simon left was paid ten years after his death in good cash by his disciples. I seem even now to see the excellent Father Olinde in the Salle Taitbout, rising as if inspired, and showing to the astonished congregation the re-

[1] In reference to the famous placard said to have been placed in the Cour des Miracles during the excitement caused by the Convulsionnaires:—

"De par le roi—défense à Dieu
De faire miracle dans ce lieu."

Digitized by Google

ceipted tailor's bill. Young grocers startled,[1] pricked up their ears, and the tailors began to believe.

However, if we in Germany through Protestantism lost much poetry in old miracles and other ancient things, we received ample amends. Men became more virtuous and nobler. Protestantism exercised the happiest influence as to purity of manners, and that strict practice of duty which we commonly call morals—in fact, Protestantism has taken in many communities a direction by which it finally quite coincides with it, and the Bible only remains as a beautiful illustration or parable. We see an especially happy change in the life of clergymen. There disappeared with celibacy also much pious immorality and monkish crime. Among the Protestant clergymen we often find the most virtuous men—men whom even the Stoics of old would have respected. One should have travelled on foot as a poor student through North Germany to know how much virtue and—to give it a good qualifying adjective—how much evangelical virtue is often to be found in a humble pastor's home. How oft have I of a winter even-

[1] "Junge Epiciers stutzten." In the French version, "Et les épiciers, de se regarder l'un l'autre la bouche béante." *Stutzten* implies not only being startled, but also a certain degree of observation, as stopping in sudden embarrassment, jibbing or balking. The French version adds that they were startled "at this transubstantiation of paper to gold."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

ing there found a hospitable reception, I a stranger, who had no other recommendation save that I was hungry and weary! And when I had eaten and slept well, and in the morning would wend my way, then came the old pastor in his dressing-gown and gave me a parting blessing which truly never brought me any ill-luck, and the good-natured, gossiping Frau Pastorin put pieces of bread and butter into my pocket, which did not less refresh me, while in the background and in silence stood the preacher's pretty daughters with rosy cheeks and violet eyes, the memory of whose modest fire warmed my heart a whole winter's day.

When Luther announced the proposition that his doctrine should only be refuted by the Bible itself or on reasonable grounds, he opened to human intelligence and reason the right to explain the Bible, and so reason was recognised as head-judge in all religious debates. Hence resulted in Germany the so-called spiritual liberty also known as freedom of thought. Thought became a right, and the decisions of reason were made legal. It is true enough that for several centuries before this men could think and speak with tolerable freedom, and the schools disputed over subjects which we must wonder that they dared to mention in the Middle Age. But this resulted from the distinction which was drawn between theological and philosophical truth, a distinction

Digitized by Google

by which they expressly guarded against heresy; and all this, moreover, was only heard in the lecture-rooms of universities, and was uttered in an abstruse Gothic Latin, of which the people understood nothing, so that little harm was to be feared for the Church. However, the Church never really permitted such proceedings, and now and then she actually burnt some poor scholar by way of protest. But after Luther there was no distinction observed between theological and philosophical truth, and people disputed in the market-place in the German country dialect, and that without fright or fear. The rulers who accepted the Reform legitimatised such freedom of thought, and a weighty world-wide result of it has been German philosophy.

In fact, human intelligence could never have spoken out so freely[1] in Greece as in Germany from the middle of the eighteenth century to the French invasion. Especially in Prussia was there a limitless freedom of thought. The Marquis of Brandenburg had understood that as he could only become legitimate king of Prussia through Protestant principles, he must also maintain Protestant liberty of thinking.

Since then, things have changed, and the natural protector of our Protestant freedom of

[1] In the French version "n'a pu s'exprimer et se *developper* aussi librement."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

thought has an understanding with the Ultramontane party to suppress it, and, to do this, traitorously uses a weapon which Popery first invented and applied against us—the censorship.

Strange! we Germans are the strongest and the cleverest race. Our princes' relations sit on every throne in Europe; our Rothschilds rule Exchanges through the world; our learned men give laws in every science; we invented gunpowder and printing,[1] and yet he who fires off a pistol among us must pay three thalers fine; and if we publish in the *Hamburger Correspondent*, "My dear wife has given birth to a daughter as fair as freedom," Doctor Hoffmann seizes his red pencil and strikes out "freedom."

Will this last long? I do not know; but I know that the question of the liberty of the press, which is now being so vehemently discussed in Germany, is very closely connected with these preceding remarks; and I believe its solution is not difficult when we reflect that freedom of the press is a natural consequence of freedom of

[1] Carlyle, who should have known better, also repeated the assertion that the German Berthold Schwartz invented gunpowder. A century before Schwartz, Roger Bacon knew it, and a century before Bacon a Norman-Latin recipe *ad faciendum le crake* (how to make a fire-cracker) had set it forth, as is shown in the notes to *The Merchant and the Friar* by Sir Francis Palsgrave.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

thought, and therefore a Protestant right. For such rights Germany has poured forth its best blood, and it may be that for the same cause it will again do battle.

This is also applicable to the question of academic freedom, which at present is so passionately exciting the German mind. Since it has been discovered that political agitation, that is, the love of freedom, prevails principally in the universities, it has been insinuated to sovereigns from every side that these institutes should be suppressed, or at least be changed into ordinary schools; and so new plans are contrived, and the *pro* and *contra* discussed. But the public opponents of the universities seem to have understood the real grounds of the question quite as little as their public advocates. They do not understand that youth is inspired for freedom everywhere, under any form of discipline, and that if the universities should be suppressed, that enthusiastic youth will declare itself in other places, and perhaps in alliance with the youth engaged in commerce and trade. The defenders only try to prove that the best of German learning and science would perish with the universities, and that academic freedom is of advantage to study because youth derives from it such fine opportunities to develop itself in so many directions, and so on; as if so many Greek

Digitized by Google

accents or a few rude expressions more or less were here the question!

And what would our princes care for all learning or science, studies or culture, should the sacred safety of their thrones be endangered? They would be heroic enough, in such case, to sacrifice all relative benefits for the only Absolute, their own absolute rule.[1] For this has been confided to them by God, and where Heaven commands, all earthly considerations must give way.

And there is as much misunderstanding of the question by the poor professors who come forward as defenders as by the public officials who publicly oppose the universities. Only the Catholic Propaganda in Germany understands the meaning of it, and these pious dwellers in darkness are the most dangerous opponents of our university system. These work against it insidiously by means of falsehood and foul play, and even when one of them (as did lately a magnificent rascal in the Aula[1] at Munich) assumes an amiable air, as if he would speak a word for the universities, a Jesuitical intrigue reveals itself. Well do these cowardly hypocrites know what is to be gained in this game;

[1] Heine refers here to the Absolute of German philosophers. The point is lost in the French version, which gives it as "un seul *bien* absolu."—*Translator.*

[2] *Aula*, university hall.

Digitized by Google

for with the universities would fall also the Protestant Church, which has been rooted in them since the Reformation, so that the whole Protestant Church history of later centuries consists almost entirely of theological disputes among the learned men of Wittenberg, Leipzig, Tübingen, and Halle.[1] The spiritual courts[2] are only the dimmed reflection of the theological faculty; they would lose with it all hold and character, and sink into an empty dependence on ministers, or even the police.

But I must not devote too much space to such melancholy reflections, the more so because we have yet to speak of the man of Providence by whom so much that was great was done for the German people. I have already shown how we through him attained the greatest freedom of thought; but Martin Luther gave us not only freedom of action, but the means to act—that is, he gave a body to the soul. He gave language to thought. He created the German language.

This he did by translating the Bible.

In fact, the Divine composer of this book seems to have known quite as well as we that it is not a matter of indifference by whom we are translated; therefore he chose his own translator, and gifted him with the wonderful power to translate from a

[1] Heine here omits to notice the Puritan development in England.—*Translator.*

[2] Consistorien.

Digitized by Google

language which was not only dead but buried into another which had not come to life.

Men had, it is true, the Vulgate, which was understood, and the Septuagint, which they might understand. But the knowledge of Hebrew was then utterly extinguished in all the Christian world. Only the Jews, who kept themselves hidden here and there in a corner of the world, preserved the traditions of this tongue. Like a ghost guarding a treasure which was confided to him when living, this murdered race sat in its gloomy Ghettos keeping watch over the Hebrew Bible, and German scholars could be seen stealing into these ill-famed blind alleys to raise the precious hoard, to gain a knowledge of the Hebrew language. When the Catholic clergy saw that danger was drawing nigh in this direction, that the people might by this side-path attain a knowledge of the true Word of God and discover its Romish falsifications, they would gladly have suppressed all Jewish tradition, and they went to work to destroy all Hebrew books. Then on the Rhine began that persecution of books against which the admirable and excellent Doctor Reuchlin fought so gloriously. Yet the theologians of Cologne, who were active in the strife, were by no means so narrow-minded—especially Hochstraaten—as they are depicted in the *Litterœ Obscurorum Virorum* by the knight Ulrich von Hütten, the valiant fellow-champion

Digitized by Google

of Reuchlin.[1] The effort was to suppress the Hebrew language. When Reuchlin conquered, Luther could begin his work. In a letter which he wrote at this time to Reuchlin, he seems to feel the great importance of the victory which the latter had won, and that in a difficult and dependent situation, while he, the Augustine monk, was at perfect liberty. He says very naïvely in this letter, "Ego nihil timeo, quia nihil habo"—"Nothing I fear, because I nothing have."

How Luther ever learned the language into which he translated the Bible is to me to this hour incomprehensible. The old Swabian dialect had utterly passed away with the knightly poetry of the imperial age of the Hohenstaufen. The old Saxon dialect—the so-called Platt-Deutsch—prevailed in only a part of North Germany, and, in spite of every effort, it never attained to a literary position. If Luther had used for his translation of the Bible the language which was spoken in the Saxony of the day, Adelung would have been right in declaring that the Saxon, especially the dialect of Meissen, is our real High

[1] These letters, which may be called a companion-piece to the works of Rabelais, and of Luther and Melanchthon, form one of the best works of humour ever written. They are in the worst and simplest Latin, and are supposed to be addressed to their chief by the most fanatical and ignorant monks, exposing all their secrets, sins, and follies. The book had an immense circulation, and greatly aided the Reformation.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

German—that is, our written tongue. But this error has been long disproved. I must lay the more stress on it because it is still current in France. The present Saxon was never a dialect of the German people any more than Silesian, for both are born of Slavonic influence. I frankly confess I do not know how the language which we find in the Bible of Luther originated, but I know that it was through this Bible, of which the press —as yet in its youth—by its black art cast forth thousands of copies among the people, that in a few years the language of Luther spread all over Germany, and was raised to be that of our literature. This written language still prevails in Germany, and gives to our otherwise politically and religiously mangled and divided country a literary unity. Such an inestimable service may indemnify us for the fact that, in the present development of this language there is something wanting in the inward earnestness[1] which we usually find in languages, developed from a single dialect. But the language in Luther's Bible does not need such genial expression, and this old book is an eternal fountain of youth for our tongue. All the expressions and turns of speech which are in the Lutheran Bible are German. The author may use them freely, and as the book

[1] *Innigkeit*, characteristic, original vigour, generally implying cordiality, warmth, or genial depth.

Digitized by Google

is in the hands of the poorest people, they need no specially erudite preparation to express themselves in a literary form. This fact will, when the great political revolution breaks out, produce remarkable results. Freedom will speak everywhere, and its speech will be Biblical.[1]

The original writings of Luther have not less contributed to fix the German language. By their polemic passion they drive deep into the heart of the time. Their tone is not always nice, but even religious revolutions are not made with rose-water. A tough log often needs a rough wedge.[2] In the Bible, Luther's language is always kept within the bounds of a certain dignity out of reverence to the ever-present spirit of God. In his controversial writings, on the other hand, he often gives himself up to his plebeian coarseness, which is at times as grand as it is repulsive. His expressions and images then resemble those colossal stone figures which are found in Indian or Egyptian cave-temples, and whose harsh colouring and strange ugliness at once repel and attract us. In this *ba-rocky* style[3] the bold monk often appears like

[1] This and the preceding sentence are omitted in the French edition.—*Translator.*

[2] "Zu dem groben Klotz gehörte manchmal ein grober Keil." Also "*harter* Keil." An old Roman saying. A French equivalent is "à vilain, vilain et demi."—*Translator.*

[3] "Durch diesen barocken Felsenstil, *i.e.*, baroque; rocky

Digitized by Google

a religious Danton, a preacher of the Mountain, who from its height hurls down varied blocks of words on the heads of his foes.

Far more remarkable and significant than his prose writings are Luther's poems, or the songs which sprung from his soul in battle and suffering. They often seem like a flower growing on a rock or a moon-ray quivering on a moving lake. Luther loved music; he even wrote a treatise on it; hence his songs are remarkably melodious. And in this respect the name of the Swan of Eisleben was appropriate to him. But he was anything but a gentle swan in many songs, in which he fired the souls of his followers and inspired himself to the wildest joy of battle. That was a defiant war-song indeed with which he and his companions entered Worms. The old cathedral trembled at the new sounds, and the ravens were terrified in their obscure nests in the towers. That song, which was the Marseilles Hymn of the Reformation, has preserved its power of inspiration to this day, and we perhaps shall use the old mail-clad words ere long for other battles—

---

style. The baroque style is properly that of the architecture of the Regency and later. It is also often applied to grotesque yet tasteless art, which showed itself in "grottoes." The word itself is also said to be derived from *peruke*, in reference to the wigs which were worn of such extravagant dimensions when it prevailed.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

God is a citadel indeed,
A good defence and weapon;
He helps us free from every need
Which unto us can happen.
The old and evil foe
Is in grim earnest now;
Great power and craft I wis
His cruel armour is,
On earth is not his equal.

But with our might is nothing done,
We soon would be y-losen,
But for us fights the proper man,
Whom God himself hath chosen.
Askest thou his name?
'Tis Jesus Christ, the same
As the Lord Zebaot;
There is no other God,
He'll keep the field for ever.

And were the world with devils filled,
And if they would devour us,
With fear we never should be chilled,
For victory is before us.
The prince of this world here,
Though grim he may appear,
Why should we fear him aught?
He's judged, his power is naught,
A single word can fell him.

And they shall let the Word remain,
No thanks for that they merit;
He is before us on the plain
With all his gifts and spirit.
And if they take our life

Digitized by Google

Goods, honour, child and wife,
Though nought to us remain,
Yet nothing will they gain;
The realm is ours for ever!

I have shown how much we owe to our dear Dr. Martin Luther for the freedom of thought which the new literature needed for its development. I have also shown how he shaped the Word in which this new literature could express itself. I have now only to add that he himself began this literature; that it, and in fact our pure literature,[1] begins with Luther; that his religious songs are the first appearances in it of any importance, and already announce the character which it was to assume. He who will speak of modern German literature must begin with Luther, and not with a Nuremberg cockney citizen[2] named

---

[1] *Schöne Literature*, belles lettres.

[2] *Spiessbürger*, a good citizen, like John Gilpin, enrolled in the city guards. The intimation is of honest stupidity, recalled what was associated once with the National Guards of Paris. To make the most of Luther, Heine is here guilty of the grossest injustice to Hans Sachs—an injustice which is the greater because Heine, of all men, must have appreciated the quaint humour and exquisite local and temporal colour of this writer, who reflects his age with rare fidelity. Equally superficial and misleading are his remarks to the effect that Luther created, entirely and alone, the German language, and that no sources of aid or inspiration whatever existed to his hand. This is the more to be regretted because, apart from these forced exaggerations, this sketch of Luther is one of the masterpieces of the

Digitized by Google

Hans Sachs, as is done by the dishonest envy of certain Romantic writers. Hans Sachs, the troubadour of the Honourable Guild of Shoemakers, whose master-song is only a silly, nonsensical parody of the earlier Minnelieder, and whose dramas are only a clumsy doltish travesty of the old mystery-plays—this pedantic jack-pudding, who painfully apes the free naïveté of the Middle Age, may perhaps be regarded as the last poet of the olden time, but by no means as the beginning or last of the new.[1] There is therefore no need of further proof ere I proceed to discuss in a decided manner the contrasts of our new literature with the elder.

If we consider German literature as it was before Luther, we find that —

I. Its material is like the life of the Middle Age itself, a mixture of two heterogeneous elements, which in a long struggle closed round each other so forcibly, that in the end they united; that is, the German nationality and the Indian-Gnostic, so-called Catholic Christianity.

II. The treatment, or much rather the spirit of the treatment, in this older literature, is romantic.

German language. He subsequently flatly contradicts himself as to this when speaking of Tauler and of Sachs.—*Translator.*

[1] Here the first book ends in the French version; that is to say, there are five and a half pages more in the German original.

Digitized by Google

The same is said abusively also of the material of that literature, as of all the developments of the Middle Age which resulted from the blending of the two elements mentioned, or German nationality and Catholic Christendom. For just as certain poets of the Middle Age treated Greek history and mythology quite romantically, so we can set forth mediæval manners and legends in classic form. The expressions classic and romantic depend, therefore, upon the spirit in which they are treated.[1] The treatment is classic when the form of that which is set forth is quite identical with the idea of the representer, as is the case in Greek works of art, where, in consequence of this identity, the greatest harmony is found between form and idea. But it is romantic when the form does not reveal the idea by identity, but lets the idea be guessed *parabolically*. I use the word *parabolic* here in preference to *symbolic*. Greek mythology had an array of forms of gods, of which every one, notwithstanding the identity of form and of idea, could, however, assume a symbolic meaning. But in this Greek religion only the forms of the gods were accurately determined or defined; everything else, such as their living and loving, was left to the will of the poet

[1] See further, as regards Heine's definition of this expression, the first book of the Romantic School, German edition of 1876, vol. vi. p. 27.—*Note by the German Publisher.*

Digitized by Google

to handle as he pleased. In the Christian religion, on the contrary, there are not such determined forms, but defined facts positively declared holy events, and deeds into which the creating mind of man may inspire a parabolic meaning. It is said that Homer invented the gods of Greece, which is not true; they existed long before in distinct outlines, but he invented their histories. The artists of the Middle Age, on the other hand, never dared to invent or add anything, however trifling, to the historical part of their religion. The fall through sin, the becoming man, baptism and the crucifixion, were deeds not to be touched, on which there could be no modelling, yet into which the creative or poetising mind of man might put a parabolic meaning. In this parabolic spirit all the arts were treated in the Middle Age, and this treatment is romantic. Hence in mediæval poetry that mystical generality[1]—the forms are so shadowy; what they do is so dream-like. All is dusky-dim, as if lit by shifting moonlight; the idea is only intimated in the form like a riddle; therefore we see a vague form, such as is adapted to a spiritualistic literature. There is not, as with the Greeks, a harmony as clear as sunlight between form and idea, but very often the idea exceeds or over-tops the given form, and the

[1] *Allgemeinheit*, universality; here *mélange* or "mixed-upness" is the best translation.

Digitized by Google

latter strives desperately or despairingly to equal it; the result being a bizarre and daring sublimity. Often, too, the form grows far over the head of the idea; a feeble, tiny thought drags and trails itself about in a colossal form and we see the grotesque—always at least deformity.

III. The general character of that literature was that, in all its products, the same firm and confident faith showed itself which then prevailed in all worldly as well as spiritual things. All the views or opinions of the time were based on authority; the poet wandered with the easy confidence of a mule along by the abyss of doubt, and there prevailed in his works a daring repose, a happy confidence, such as at a later time became impossible when the culminating point of those authorities or the authority of the Pope was broken, and everything else fell after it. The poems of the Middle Age have therefore all the same character; they do not seem as if one man, but as if the whole race had composed them; they are objective, epic, and naïve.

In the literature which sprung up with Luther we find directly to the contrary that—

I. Its material, or the stuff which it treats, is the field of the interests of the Reformation and views as to the old order of things. To the new spirit of the time, that mixed faith which sprung up from the two elements before mentioned, that

Digitized by Google

is, German nationality and Indian-Gnostic Christianity, is entirely repulsive; it regards the latter as heathen idolatry, and it will have in its place the true religion of the Jewish-deistic Bible. A new order of things formed itself; the spirit made discoveries which promoted the well-being of material man by the development of industry and progress of philosophy; Spiritualism became discredited in public opinion; the Third Estate raised itself; the Revolution began to growl and roar in hearts and heads, and whatever the age felt and thought and wanted and would have, was spoken out, and that is the material of modern literature.

II. The spirit of treatment is no longer romantic, but classic. From the revival of ancient literature there spread all over Europe a genial enthusiasm for Greek and Roman authors, and the learned, who were the only ones who then wrote, sought to make the spirit of classical antiquity their own. If they could not attain, like the Greeks, to a harmony of form and idea, they clung all the more strongly to the externals of Greek treatment; they arranged all according to Greek precept into classes; they refrained from every romantic extravagance, and in this regard we call them classic.

III. The general character of modern literature lies in this, that individuality and scepticism now prevail. Authorities are overthrown, reason is

Digitized by Google

now the only lamp of man, and his own conscience his only staff in the dark mazes of life. Man sits alone face to face with his Creator, and sings him his song. Therefore this literature begins with hymns. But even later, when it became worldly, there ruled in it the deepest self-consciousness, the feeling of personality. Poetry is now no longer objective, epic, and naïve, but subjective, lyrical, and reflecting.

Digitized by Google

FIRST PART.—BOOK SECOND.

FROM LUTHER TO KANT.

In the foregoing book we have treated of the great religious revolution which was represented by Martin Luther in Germany. Now we have to speak of the philosophical revolution which came from it, and which is, in fact, the last result of Protestantism.

But before relating how this revolution was caused by Immanuel Kant, we must discuss more in detail the philosophical precedents in other countries, the meaning and significance of Spinoza, the result of the philosophy of Leibnitz, the mutual relations of this philosophy and religion, their irritations and discords; and we must constantly bear in mind those questions of philosophy to which we attribute a social significance, and whose solution concurs with that of religion.

This is now the question of the nature of God. "God is the beginning and end of all wisdom," say the believers in their humility, and

Digitized by Google

the philosopher, in all the pride of his knowledge, must agree with them as to this pious utterance.

It was not Bacon, as is generally taught, but René Descartes who was the father of the new philosophy, and we shall clearly show here the German philosophy descended from him.[1]

René Descartes was a Frenchman, and here the glory of the beginning belongs to great France. But great France, the noisy, agitated, loquacious land of the French, was never a fit soil for philosophy, and perhaps never will be; and as René Descartes felt this, he went to Holland, to the calm and silent land of *trek-schuyten* and Dutchmen, and there wrote his philosophical works. It was only there that he could free his soul from traditional formalism and construct an entire philosophy from pure thoughts, borrowed neither from faith nor empiricism,[2] as since exacted from every true philosophy. Only there could he so deeply sink into the

[1] Descartes was truly enough the father of modern metaphysical philosophy, beyond which Heine never advanced; but Bacon's was that of induction, the basis of evolution, which has been developed by Darwin and his school.—*Translator.*

[2] *Empiric.* The philosophy based on sensation or experience, *e.g.*, that of Locke. The term in the sense of quackery and superstition came from medical misuse. Thus the "Empiric Medicine" of Marcellus Burdigalensis of the fourth century included charms and incantations to cure diseases, the author intending to assert by his title that he had tested them experimentally.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

abysses of thought as to find in its lowest depths of self-consciousness and confirm by thought that self-consciousness in the world-famed saying, *Cogito, ergo sum.*

Perhaps Descartes could not have then dared to teach, except in Holland, a philosophy which was at most open war with all the traditions of the past. The honour belongs to him to have founded the autonomy of philosophy; this no longer needed permission to think from theology, and it could henceforth place itself by the side of the latter as an independent equal. I do not say oppose itself, for the principle then prevailed that the truths to which we arrive through philosophy are in the end the same as those which are revealed by religion. The Schoolmen, as I have before remarked, not only yielded supremacy to religion over philosophy, but declared that the latter was an idle game and mere battling with words when it came into contention with religious dogmas. The main thing with them was to express their thoughts, no matter under what conditions. They said, "Once one is one," and proved it, but added, smiling, that it was again an error of human reason, which always goes wrong when it comes into contradiction with the decrees of œcumenic councils, that once one is three, and that is the real truth, as was long since revealed to us in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy

Digitized by Google

Ghost! The Schoolmen formed in secret a philosophic opposition to the Church, but in public they pretended the utmost deference to it; in many cases they fought for it; in grand processions they paraded in its train, as did the French deputies of the Opposition in the solemnities of the Restoration.

This comedy of the Schoolmen lasted more than six centuries, becoming all the time more trifling. By destroying Scholasticism Descartes also destroyed the superannuated opposition of the Middle Age. The old brooms had been worn to stumps by long sweeping; too much rubbish and dust stuck to them, and a new world wanted new brooms. After every revolution the hitherto opposition must resign, else there will be great follies. We have experienced this. At that time it was not the Catholic Church so much as its old opponents, the rearguard of the Schoolmen, who first rose against the Cartesian philosophy. The Pope did not forbid it till 1663.

I may assume that Frenchmen have an all-sufficient knowledge of the philosophy of their great countryman, and therefore need not show how the most opposing doctrines could take from it necessary material. I here speak of Idealism and Materialism.

As writers generally, especially in France, speak of these two doctrines by the names of

Digitized by Google

Spiritualism and Sensualism, and as I use both terms in another sense, I must here, to avoid confusion of ideas, discuss the expressions more accurately.

Since the earliest times there have been two opposite opinions or views as to the nature of human thought—that is, as to the final or deepest base of human knowledge, or the origin of ideas. It is maintained on one side that we get our ideas only from without, that our mind is only an empty receptacle in which the perceptions taken in from the senses work themselves up, very much like the food in our stomach. To use a better simile, these people regard our mind as a *tabula rasa*, on which experience afterwards writes every day something new, according to certain laws of writing.

Others, of different views, declare that ideas are innate or born in man; that the human mind is the first or primitive seat of ideas, and that the world without, experience, and the intermediary senses bring us only to a knowledge of that which was already in the soul, and wake up the slumbering ideas which were already there.

The first view has been called Sensualism, and often Empiricism, the latter Spiritualism and Rationalism. From this, misunderstandings could readily arise, since, as I have shown in the previous book, they have been employed to indi-

Digitized by Google

cate those two social systems which show themselves in all the manifestations of life. We will leave the name Spiritualism to that fanatical arrogance of the spirit which, striving for self-glorification, endeavours to trample on, or at least vilify matters, and we abandon the term Sensualism to the opposition which, on the contrary, aims at a rehabilitation of matter, and vindicates the inalienable rights of the senses, without gainsaying the rights of the spirit, or even its supremacy.

These two systems have been opposed since men began to think, for there have always been men of imperfect capacities for enjoyment, of crippled senses and bruised flesh, who find all the grapes sour in this garden of God, who see the decoying serpent by every tree of Paradise, and seek their triumph in asceticism and their pleasure in pain. On the contrary, there are also and ever with us well-grown, bodily-proud natures, who like to hold their heads high; all the stars and roses smile sympathetically with them; they love to listen to the melodies of the nightingale and of Rossini; they love the beautiful Glück and Titian's flesh, and to the dull fellow who hangs his head and to whom all such things are an abomination they reply in the words of Shakespeare's fool, "Thinkest thou because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?" To these two social

Digitized by Google

systems I leave the names of Spiritualism and Sensualism.[1]

On the other hand, I give to philosophical opinions on the nature of our knowledge the names Idealism and Materialism, and indicate by the first the doctrine of innate ideas or ideas *à priori*, and by the other the theory of knowledge through the senses, or that of ideas *à posteriori*.

It is a very significant fact that the idealistic side of the Cartesian philosophy never had any success in France. Several distinguished Jansenists followed this course for a while, but they soon lost themselves in Christian Spiritualism. Perhaps it was this circumstance which discredited Idealism in France. The people divine by instinct whom they need to fulfil their mission. The French were already well on their way to that political revolution which broke out at the end of the eighteenth century, and for which they had need of an axe, and of a material philosophy not less cold and cutting. Christian Spiritualism was a fellow-warrior in the ranks of the enemy, and Sensualism was therefore their natural ally. As

[1] All of the preceding passage is omitted in the French version, and the German publisher informs us that Heine himself had stricken it out of the original MS., probably in haste, because the same quotation from Shakespeare is repeated in another place. As for the quotation, Heine gives it as follows: "Narr, meinst du, weil du tugendhaft bist, solle es keinen süssen Sekt und keine Torten auf dieser Weltgeben."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

the French Sensualists were generally Materialists, the error rose that Sensualism proceeded only from Materialism. But it can develop itself just as well as a result of Pantheism, and then it has a beautiful and commanding form. But we will not deny to French Materialism its dues for service rendered. It was an admirable antidote or counter-poison against the evil of the past, a desperate remedy for a desperate disease, mercury for an infected race. The French philosophers had chosen John Locke for their master; he was the saviour whom they required. His essay on the Human Understanding was their evangel, and they swore by it. John Locke had been in the school of Descartes, and had learned from him all that an Englishman can learn,—mechanics, analysis, combination, construction, and calculation. But one thing he never could understand, which was innate ideas. Therefore he perfected the theory that we obtain our knowledge from without by experience. He made of the human soul a kind of calculating box; the whole man became an English machine. This is also applicable to man as the scholars of Locke constructed him; but though they differ among themselves by different names, they are all afraid of the final results of their leading principle, and the disciples of Condillac are horrified when classed with Helvetius, or even Holbach, or perhaps at last with a La Metrie. However, it is inevitable, and

Digitized by Google

I must characterise the French philosophers of the eighteenth century and their followers of to-day, one and all, as Materialists. *L'homme machine* is the most consequent book of French philosophy, and its title indicates the final conclusion of its view of all things.

These Materialists were in the main deists, for a machine presupposes a mechanic, and it pertains to the highest perfection of the former that it recognises and esteems the technical knowledge of such an artist, be it in its own construction or in that of other works.

Materialism has fulfilled its mission in France. Perhaps it is now perfecting the same work in England, and the revolutionary parties, especially the Benthamites, the preachers of utility, are based on Locke. These are strong minds who have grasped the right lever wherewith to move John Bull. John Bull is a born Materialist, and his Christian Spiritualism is for the greater part traditional hypocrisy, or only material or sensual narrow-mindedness;[1] his flesh yields because the spirit comes not to his aid. It is different in Germany, and the German revolutionaries err if they believe that a material philosophy will favour their aims. Nor will any general revolu-

[1] *Materielle Bornirtheit.* In the French version, *une résignation stupide.* The four following paragraphs are wanting in the French.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

tion be possible there so long as its principles are not deduced from a more popular, more religious, and more German philosophy, and made predominant by its power. What philosophy is this? That we will discuss candidly later. I say candidly, for I also expect that Germans will read these pages.

Germany has always manifested an antipathy for Materialism, and was therefore for a century and a half the real theatre of Idealism. Germans also sought the school of Descartes, and his greatest scholar was named Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz. As Locke developed the materialistic, so Leibnitz pursued the idealistic direction of the master. We find in him, expressed most determinedly, the theory of innate ideas. He opposed Locke in his *Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement Humain.* With Leibnitz arose great zeal for philosophic study in Germany. He woke German souls and led them in new ways. Whether it was the innate gentleness or the religious feeling which inspired him, his works reconciled the most revolted minds with their boldness, and the effect was enormous. The boldness of this philosopher is specially shown in his doctrine of monads, one of the most remarkable hypotheses which ever sprung from the head of a philosopher. And it is also the best which he produced, for there was foreshadowed in it the knowledge of the most important laws which

Digitized by Google

our present philosophy has produced. The doctrine of monads was perhaps only an awkward formulising of the same law which is now declared by natural philosophers in better formulas. I should here, instead of the word "law," only use that of formula, for Newton is right when he remarks that what we call law does not really exist in Nature, and that those are only formulas which come to the aid of our power of comprehension[1] to explain a series of phenomena in Nature. The *Theodicea* is in Germany the most discussed of all the works of Leibnitz, and yet it is his weakest. This book, as well as certain others in which the religious feeling of Leibnitz expresses itself, attracted to him many a slander, many a bitter misconception. His enemies accused him of the extreme of amiable weak-mindedness; his friends, defending him, made him out a crafty hypocrite. The character of Leibnitz was for a long time a subject of controversy among us. The best natured have never been able to free him from the reproach of duplicity. He was most reviled by the free-thinkers and enlighteners. How could they forgive a philosopher who had defended the Trinity, eternal punishment in hell, and even the divinity of Christ? Their toleration did not stretch so far. And yet

[1] *Fassungskraft.* In the French version *intelligence.* Literally power of grasping.

Digitized by Google

Leibnitz was neither a knave nor a fool, and from his harmonious heights he could well defend all Christianity. I say all Christianity, for he defended it against semi-Christianity. He pointed out the consistency of the orthodox in contrast to the half-way in completeness of their opponents. More he did not seek. And he was on that point of indifference from which the most different systems only seem to be different sides of the same truth. Schelling subsequently recognised this point of indifference, and Hegel gave it scientific foundation as a system of systems. It was in this spirit that Leibnitz occupied himself with a harmony between Plato and Aristotle, a problem which has been proposed to us many times of later years. Has it been solved?

No, in truth, no! For this problem is nothing else than an adjustment of the strife between Idealism and Materialism. Plato is thoroughly Idealist, and only knows innate or rather connate ideas.[1] Man brings his ideas with him to the world, and when he becomes conscious of them, they seem to him like memories of an earlier existence. Hence the vagueness and mysticism of Plato, who only remembers more or less distinctly. With Aristotle, on the contrary, all is clear, significant, and certain, because his experi-

[1] "Oder vielmehr mitgeborene Ideen." This is wanting in the French version.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

ences do not reveal themselves in him in relation to a previous life, for he draws everything from experience, and knows how to classify everything most accurately. Therefore he has always been the model for all empirical philosophers, who cannot sufficiently praise God for making him the tutor of Alexander, through whose conquests he had so many opportunities to advance science, and that his victorious pupil gave him so many thousand talents for zoological purposes. No doubt the old master expended all the money conscientiously, and dissected, for it, an honourable amount of mammaliæ, stuffed sufficient birds, and made in so doing the most important observations; but the great animal whom he had always before his eyes, whom he himself had trained, and who was far more remarkable than all the menagerie of all the world in those days, he passed by unexamined. In fact, he left us without any knowledge as to the nature of that young king, at whose life and deeds we are always amazed as if at miracles and problems. Who was Alexander? What did he want? Was he a madman or a god? As yet we do not know. Aristotle, however, gives all the better information as to Babylonian monkeys,[1] Indian parrots, and Greek tragedies, which latter he also cut up.

[1] Assyrian quadrupeds in the latest French version.

Digitized by Google

Plato and Aristotle! they are not only two systems, but the types of two different kinds of human nature, which, since ages beyond the mind's grasp, under all forms or disguises, have always been more or less opposed. So they fought all through the Middle Age till this our time, and this battle is the most significant summary of Christian Church history. Plato and Aristotle are always discussed under other names. Visionary, mystical, Platonic souls have revealed unto them from the depths of the soul, or of feeling, Christian ideas and corresponding symbols. Practical, classifying, Aristotelian natures form from these ideas and symbols a fixed system, a dogmatic, and a cultus. The Church at last embraced both these natures of men, one entering the camp of the secular clergy, and the other that of monasticism, but who still kept up a constant feud. The same antagonism manifested itself in the Protestant Church, in which the division between pietists and orthodox corresponds to a certain degree to that between Catholic mystics and dogmatics. The Protestant pietists are mystics without imagination, and the Protestant orthodox are dogmatics without intelligence or wit.

We find these two Protestant parties engaged in bitter strife in the time of Leibnitz, and his philosophy intervened in it later, when Christian

Digitized by Google

Wolf mastered it, adapted it to the wants of the time, and, what was of the most importance, brought it forth in German. But before we speak further of this pupil of Leibnitz, of the result of his efforts, and of the later destinies of Lutheranism, we must mention the man of Providence who had developed himself at the same time with Locke and Leibnitz in the school of Descartes, who was long regarded with hate and scorn, and despite it rose in our days to general spiritual supremacy.

I speak of Benedict Spinoza.

A great genius forms himself on another great genius less by assimilation than by friction. One diamond grinds another. So the philosophy of Descartes by no means produced that of Spinoza, but only aided its development. Hence we find in the pupil the method of the master, which is a great gain; and then we find in Spinoza, as in Descartes, the system of demonstration taken from mathematics, which is a great defect. The mathematical form gives to Spinoza a forbidding exterior. But it is the hard shell of the almond, for which the kernel is all the sweeter. In reading Spinoza, we are seized by a feeling as when contemplating Nature in her grandest aspects of life-inspired repose, a forest of thoughts, high as heaven, whose blooming summits are in wavy motion, while their immovable trunks are deep-

Digitized by Google

rooted in earth. There is a certain *air* in the writings of Spinoza which is inexplicable; we are breathed on as by the breezes of the future. The spirit of the Hebrew prophets, it may be, rested on their remote descendant. There is in him a solemn earnestness, a self-conscious pride, a *grandezza* of thought which also seems to be an inheritance; for Spinoza belonged to those families of martyrs who were formerly driven by Most Catholic kings from Spain; to which add the patience of the Hollander, which is as perfectly manifested in all the life of the man as it is in his writings.

It is proved that the life of Spinoza was as free from every fault and pure and spotless as that of his divine cousin Jesus Christ. Like the latter, he too struggled for his doctrine; like him, he bore the crown of thorns. Wherever a great soul speaks out its thoughts, is Golgotha.

Dear reader, should you ever go to Amsterdam, let your guide show you the Spanish synagogue. It is a fine building; its roof rests on four colossal pillars, and in the midst is the pulpit where the curse of excommunication was uttered against the scorner of Mosaic law, the Hidalgo Don Benedict de Spinoza.[1] On such an occasion a ram's horn,

[1] Hidalgo Don Benedict de Spinoza sounds sufficiently strange; but to the revolutionary Heine the very shadowy title of the poor scholar was a great matter of envy and admiration.

Digitized by Google

called the *schofar*, is blown. There must be something horrible connected with this horn. For, as I have read in the life of Solomon Maimond, the Rabbi of Altona once visited him—the pupil of Kant—to bring him back to the old faith, and as Maimond obstinately persisted in his philosophic heresy, he became threatening and produced a *schofar* with the darkly significant words, "Do you know what *that* is?" And when the Kantian calmly replied, "Yes, it is a goat's horn," the Rabbi in horror fell flat on his back.

With this horn the excommunication of Spinoza was accompanied; he was solemnly expelled from the community of Israel, and declared to be unworthy henceforth to bear the name of Jew. His Christian enemies were magnanimous enough to allow him this, but the Jews, the Swiss guard of deism, were implacable, and the place is still shown before the Spanish synagogue in Amsterdam where they once endeavoured to murder him with their long daggers.

I could not refrain from specially calling attention to such personal misadventures of the man, for he was formed not only by lessons of learning, but those of life. Herein he differs from most philosophers, and in his writings we recognise its direct influences. Theology was not merely a branch of learning for him, nor politics, which he had also learned practically. The father of his

Digitized by Google

betrothed had been hung for political offences in the Netherlands. And in no place in the world are people as badly hung as they are in Holland. You have no idea of the interminable preparations and ceremonies observed there on such occasions. The culprit is bored to death before he is executed, and the spectator has most abundant and excessive time for reflection. I am convinced that Benedict Spinoza reflected a great deal over the execution of old Van Ende, and just as he had previously comprehended religion with its daggers, he now comprehended politics with its halters; information of which is given in his *Tractatus Politicus*.[1]

I have only undertaken to show the way and manner in which philosophers are more or less allied, and I set forth their degrees of relationship and their inheritances. This philosophy of Spinoza, the third son of René Descartes, as he teaches in his chief work, the Ethics, is as remote from the Materialism of his brother Locke as from the Idealism of his brother Leibnitz. Spinoza does not torment himself analytically with the question as to the ultimate grounds of our knowledge; he gives us his great synthesis, his explanation of divinity.

[1] *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus.* This work is the principal source of modern German Rationalism. It has been well translated into English.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

Benedict Spinoza teaches that there is only one substance, which is God. This single substance is infinite and absolute. All finite substances are derived from it, are contained in it, rise and sink in it; they have only a relative, transitory, accidental existence. The absolute substance reveals itself to us as much under the form of infinite thought as that of endless extension. Both infinite thought and infinite extension are the two attributes of the absolute substance. We only know these two attributes, but God, the absolute substance, has perhaps other attributes which we do not know. "Non dico me Deum omnino cognoscere, sed me quædam ejus attributa, non autem omnia, neque maximam intelligere partem."

Only senselessness and malignity could apply to this doctrine the adjective atheistic.[1] No one has expressed himself more sublimely regarding the Divinity than Spinoza. Instead of saying that he denies God, one could rather declare that he denies man. All finite things are to him only *modi* of the infinite substance. All finite things are contained in God; the human soul is only a

[1] Heine, who was not a very deep or learned metaphysician, forgets here that it all depends on the conception which we have of, or the definition which we may attach to, the words *substance*, *matter*, and *God*, or that Pantheism carried to its logical extreme is Atheism—that is, it ends with *natura naturans*.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

ray of the infinite thought; the human body is only an atom of the endless extension. God is the illimitable cause of both spirits and bodies, *natura naturans*.

In a letter to Madame Du Deffant, Voltaire shows himself quite enraptured with an idea of this lady, who had declared that all things which a man cannot know are surely of such a nature that it would be of no use to him to know them. I would apply that observation to that passage of Spinoza which I have above given in his own words, and according to which not only thought and extension are attributes of God, but perhaps others which are perhaps for us unknowable. What we cannot know has for us no value, at least from the social point of view, where the question is to reduce to practical form what has been known in the spirit. In our explanation of the being of God we have therefore regard only to those two recognisable attributes. And, then, after all the things which we call "attributes of God" are only different forms of our perception, and these different forms are identical in the absolute substance. Thought is finally only invisible extension, and extension is only visible thought. Here we find ourselves in the leading clause of the German philosophy of identity, which is not essentially different from that of Spinoza. Schelling may contend, on the contrary, that his philosophy is

Digitized by Google

different from that of Spinoza, that his is more of "a living blending of the ideal and real," and that it differs from Spinozaism "as a perfect Greek statue differs from a stiff Egyptian mummy." I must still distinctly declare that Schelling in his earlier period, when he was as yet a philosopher, did not differ in the least from Spinoza. All he did was to get to the same philosophy by another road, as I show in another place, when I explain how Kant opened a new way, how Fichte followed him, and Schelling trod in his footsteps, and while wandering about lost in the forest shades of natural philosophy, he found himself standing at last face to face before the grand statue of Benedict Spinoza.

The recent philosophy of Nature has only this merit, that it has indicated with sharpest sagacity the eternal parallelism which reigns between spirit and matter. I say spirit and matter, using the expressions as synonymous for what Spinoza calls thought and extension. To a certain degree what our natural philosophers call spirit and nature, or the ideal and real, is quite the same.

I shall consequently indicate with the name *Pantheism* not so much the system as the manner in which Spinoza regarded it. In this latter the unity of God may be assumed as well as in deism. But the God of the Pantheists is in the world itself —not merely penetrated by his divinity, as St. Augustine once tried to explain it when he compared

Digitized by Google

God to a great lake and the world to a great sponge swimming in it and imbibing divinity. No, the world is not steeped and impregnated in God, but as identical with God. God, who is called a substance by Spinoza and the Absolute by German philosophers, is "all that which is;" he is matter as well as spirit; both are alike divine, and whoever insults holy matter sins even as he sins who sins against the Holy Ghost.

The God of the Pantheists differs also from that of the deists, because he is himself *in* the world, while the latter is quite out of, or, what is the same, *over* it. The God of the deists rules the world from above downwards, as if it were a separate establishment, but the deists differ among themselves as to the mode or manner of this rule. The Hebrews conceive God as a thundering tyrant, the Christians as a loving father; the pupils of Rousseau, or the whole Genevese school, imagine him as a clever artist who made the world much as their papa made his watches, and as connoisseurs they admire the work and praise the master on high.

To the deist, who consequently admits a God out of or above the world, the spirit only is holy, since he regards the latter as the divine breath with which the Creator of the world has inspired the human body, the work kneaded by his own hands from clay. The Jews, therefore, regarded

Digitized by Google

the body as something of small account, or as a miserable envelope of the *ruach hakodasch*, the holy breath or spirit, and to this alone they devoted their care, their reverence, their cult. They became through this peculiarly the people of the spirit, chaste, sober, serious, abstract, obstinate, inclined to martyrdom, and their sublimest form in all or flower is Jesus Christ. He is in the true sense of the word the incarnate spirit, and deeply significant is the beautiful relation that a pure virgin gave birth to him by conception from the Spirit.

But if the Jews treated the body with little respect, the Christians went still further on this road, and regarded it as something objectionable, bad, or as evil itself. We see, some centuries after the birth of Christ, a religion rise which is destined to eternally amaze mankind, and to compel the latest generations to an admiration of awe.[1] Yes, it is a great and holy religion, filled with infinite happiness, which would conquer for the spirit the most unconditional supremacy in this world. But this religion was just too sublime, too pure, entirely too good for this world, where its idea could only be set forth in theory, but

[1] "Welche ewig die Menschheit in Erstaunen setzen, und den spätesten Geschlechtern die schauerlichsten Bewunderung abtrotzen wird." The most considerate translation cannot remove from this passage its "puff and pleonasm."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

never practically carried out. The attempt to realise this idea brought forth an infinite array of dazzling deeds, of which poets in every age will long sing and say. The effort to reduce the idea of Christianity to practice, as we, in fine, see, failed miserably, and this unfortunate effort has cost mankind incalculable sacrifices, and its melancholy result is our present social illness in all Europe. If, as many think, we live as yet in the youth of mankind, then Christianity belongs to the most extravagant of its college ideas, which do far more credit to its heart than to its head. Christianity abandoned all that was material and worldly to the hands of Cæsar and his Jewish attendants,[1] and contented itself with denying the supremacy of the one and defiling the others in public opinion. But lo! the hated sword and the despised money got the supreme power in the end, and the representatives of the spirit were obliged to enter into arrangement with them. Yes, and this agreement even became a solid alliance. Not only the Roman, but also the English, the Prussian, in short all privileged priests, have united with Cæsar and his consorts to oppress the people. But from this alliance will result the more rapid ruin of Spiritualism. Some priests have already perceived this, and to

[1] "Jüdischen Kammerknechte." In the French version *et aux banquiers talmudistes.*

Digitized by Google

rescue religion they give themselves the aspect of renouncing that ruinous alliance and come over into our ranks.[1] They wear the red cap, they swear death and hatred to all kings, to the seven blood-drinkers; they cry for equality in earthly possessions, they curse despite Marat and Robespierre. Between us, if we look into them closely, we shall find that they read mass in the language of Jacobinism, and as they once brought to Cæsar poison in the host, so they now bring to the people their hosts hidden in revolutionary poison, for they know that we love such deadly stuff.

Yet all your weary efforts are in vain. Humanity is sated and disgusted with all kinds of sacramental wafers, and longs for more nourishing food, for real bread and beautiful flesh. Humanity smiles pityingly at those youthful ideals which with all its efforts it could never realise, and it is becoming manly and maturely practical. Humanity now cherishes the system of worldly utility; it thinks seriously of a good, comfortable, citizen-like establishment, of sensible housekeeping, and of comfort for its old age. There is no longer any question as to leaving the sword in Cæsar's

[1] This is followed in the French version by the words "en s'affublant de nos couleurs." But all that which follows to the end of the paragraph or to the word "stuff" is wanting in it.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

hands or the money-bags to his deputies. The privileged honours will be torn from Cæsar, and industry be freed from the old disgrace.[1] The next question is how to recover our health, for we still feel very weak in our limbs—the holy vampires of the Middle Age have sucked so much of our life's blood; and then we must still offer to Matter such great expiatory sacrifices to atone for our ancient injuries to it. It would, perhaps, be even advisable should we institute festal games, and even manifest to matter still more extraordinary honours of reparation; for Christianity, incapable of annihilating matter, has on all occasions degraded it, depreciating and reviling its noblest pleasures, and the senses being forced into hypocrisy, the result was lies and sin. We must clothe our women in new chemises and new thoughts, and fumigate all our feelings,[2] as if we had passed through a pestilence.

The immediate aim of all our most recent reforms or institutions is relatively the rehabilitation of matter, the restoration of it to its dignity, its moral recognition, its religious sanctification, its reconciliation with the spirit. Purusa will be again wedded to Prakriti. It was by their violent separation—as is so admirably and ingeni-

[1] The preceding two sentences are not given in the French version.

[2] In the French version *à la fumée des parfums.*

Digitized by Google

ously represented in the Indian myth—that the great rent in all the world, or evil, originated.

Do you now know what evil is in the world? The Spiritualists have always reproached us that according to the Pantheistic view all difference ceases between good and bad. But evil is partly the mad idea involved in their views of the world, and partly the result of their own arrangement of the world.[1] According to their view of the world, matter is in and of itself evil, which is really a slander, and a terrible blasphemy of God. Matter never becomes evil except when it is forced to conspire in secret against the usurpations of the spirit, when the spirit has defiled or slandered it, and she has prostituted herself from self-contempt, or when she, with the hatred of despair, revenges herself on the spirit; and so evil is only a result of the spiritual arrangement of the world.

God is identical with the world. He manifests himself in plants, which lead without consciousness a cosmic-magnetic life. He manifests himself in plants, which, in their sensual dream-life, experience a more or less dull existence. But he manifests himself most grandly in man, who not only feels, but thinks at the same time, who knows

[1] Therefore, if there were no "Spiritualists," there could be no "evil" in the world. This passage is much admired by modern dynamiters.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

how to distinguish himself individually from objective Nature, and bears already in his reason the ideas which manifest themselves to him in the world of phenomena. In man, divinity attains to self-consciousness, and such self-consciousness reveals itself again through man. But this is not effected in and by the single individual, but in and by the totality of mankind, so that every man only comprehends and represents a portion of the God-universe, but all men grasp and set forth the whole God-universe in the idea and in reality. Every race has, perhaps, the mission to cognise and make known a certain portion of that God-universe—to understand a series of phenomena, to bring to perception a series of ideas, and to transmit the result to succeeding races, who have in turn the same mission. God is therefore the real hero of the world's history, which is naught save his constant thinking, his incessant action, his word, his deed; and one may say with justice of all mankind that it is an incarnation of God.[1]

It is an error to suppose that this religion of Pantheism leads men to indifference. On the contrary, the knowledge of his divinity will inspire man to manifest it, and from this point the

[1] This *abrégé* of the Schelling-Oken natural philosophy is suggestive in expression of the influence of the *Geschichte der Seele* of Schubart, whom Heine probably knew in Munich.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

true great deeds of true heroism will glorify the earth.

The political revolution which bases itself on the principles of French Materialism will find no opponents in the Pantheists, but allies, and allies who have drawn their convictions from a deeper source or from a religious synthesis. We promote the well-being of the material, the material prosperity of the peoples, not because we, like the Materialists, despise the spirit, but because we know that the divinity of man proclaims itself even in his bodily appearance, and misery destroys or makes vile the body, the image of God, the spirit thereby utterly perishing. The great word of the revolution which St. Just pronounced, "*Le pain est le droit du peuple*" (bread is the people's right), is according to us, "*Le pain est le droit divin de l'homme*" (bread is man's divine right[1]). We do not contend for the human, but for the divine rights of man. In this and in many other things we differ from the men of the Revolution. We will not be *sans culottes*, nor frugal citizens, nor economical small presidents. We found a democracy of equally lordly, equally holy, and equally happy gods. You demand simple costumes, austere manners, and cheap unseasoned pleasures; we, on

[1] "Somebody will pay for it," said Mr. Wilkins Micawber. St. Just and Heine have inadvertently omitted to explain how all this bread is to be paid for or by whom.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

the contrary, demand nectar and ambrosia, purple garments, costly perfumes, luxury and splendour, dances of laughing nymphs, music and comedies. Be not angered, O virtuous republicans! To your censuring reproaches we reply what the fool in Shakespeare has already said, "Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?"

The Saint-Simonians understood and wanted something of the kind, but they stood on an unfavourable soil, and the Materialism which surrounded suppressed them. They were better understood in Germany, for Germany is the most propitious soil for Pantheism; it is the religion of our greatest thinkers and best artists, and deism, as I shall explain in another place, has there long perished in theory. It maintains itself there, like many other things, only among the unthinking masses, without reasonable warrant.[1] It is not said, but every one knows, that Pantheism is the public secret in Germany. In fact, we have outgrown deism. We are free, and do not want a thundering tyrant; we are grown-up, and require no fatherly care. Nor are we the bungled work of a great mechanic. Deism is a religion for slaves, for children, for Genevese, for watchmakers.

[1] This passage is wanting in the French version.

Digitized by Google

Pantheism is the secret religion of Germany, and that it would come to that was foreseen fifty years ago by those German writers who warred so vigorously on Spinoza. The most furious of these foes was Doctor Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, who sometimes has the honour shown him of being classed among German philosophers. He was nothing but a quarrelsome sneak, who dressed himself in the cloak of philosophy, and stealing in among philosophers, first whimpered a great deal about his love and tender heart, and then burst out into abuse of reason. His eternal refrain ever was that philosophy or knowledge by reason is mere delusion, that reason does not know herself to what she leads, but conducts man into a dark labyrinth of error and contradiction, and that Faith is the only sure guide. The mole! he did not see that reason, like the eternal sun, which, while it wanders high in heaven, lightens its path with its own glorious rays. Nothing can be compared to the pious genial hatred of little Jacobi for great Spinoza.

It is worth observing that the most different parties made war on Spinoza. They form an army whose varied contrasts are very amusing. Side by side with a swarm of white and black Capuchins, with crosses and smoking censers, marches the phalanx of Encyclopædists, who are also enraged at this *penseur téméraire*. By the Rabbi of the

Digitized by Google

synagogue of Amsterdam, who sounds the signal of attack on his ram's horn of faith, trips Arouet de Voltaire, who trills on his flageolet or piccolo of persiflage for the benefit of deism; and in between whines and grumbles old-woman Jacobi, the sutler-wife of this army of religion.

Let us escape from the charivari, and returning from our pantheistic tour, refer again to the philosophy of Leibnitz, whose further fate in Germany remains to be told.

Leibnitz, as you know, had written his works in Latin or French. Christian Wolf was the excellent man who not only systematised the ideas of Leibnitz, but lectured on them in German. And yet his greatest merit did not consist in having put the ideas of Leibnitz into a compact system, and still less that he made them accessible in German to a larger public: his chief desert lies in this, that he invited us to philosophise in our native language. For as until Luther we only treated theology, so until Wolf we only discussed philosophy in Latin. The example of a few who had previously read in German remained without result, but the literary historian must reflect on them with special praise. Especially would I mention Johannes Tauler, a Dominican monk, who was born in the beginning of the fourteenth century by the Rhine, and who died, I believe, in 1361 at Strasburg. He was a

Digitized by Google

pious man, and belonged to those mystics whom I have characterised as the Platonic party of the Middle Age. In the last years of his life he renounced all pedantic obscurity, was not ashamed to preach in the humble tongue of the people, and those sermons which he wrote down, as well as the German translations of some of his earlier Latin preachings, belong to the monuments of the German language.[1] For even so early as this it shows itself not only adapted to metaphysical discussion, but far more fitted for it than Latin. This last, the language of the Romans, can never cast off its origin. It is a language of command for captains in the field, of decretals for ministers, a legal language for misers, a lapidary one for the Roman race as hard as stone. And it became the predestined tongue of Materialism. Though Christianity, with perfect Christian patience, tormented itself for more than a thousand years in trying to spiritualise this speech, it did not succeed, and when Johannes Tauler would sink his soul into the most terrible abyss of thought, and when his heart swelled with

[1] In the French version: *comptent parmi les monuments les plus remarquables de la langue allemande.* Such being the case, it is singular that our historian makes no mention of them whatever in his account of German literature before Luther. But Heine was predetermined to make a melodramatic departure from the great reformer and ignore all his predecessors —*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

intensest religious feelings, he was obliged to speak German. His language is like a mountain torrent which bursts out of a hard rock, wondrously impregnated with perfumes of unknown flowers and strange mysterious virtues of stones. But it was only in more recent times that the practical applicability of the German language to philosophy was observed. In no other could Nature so reveal her most occult work as in our dear and delightful mother-tongue. It was only on the mighty oak that the sacred mistletoe could grow.

This would be the place to mention Paracelsus, or, as he called himself, Theophrastus Paracelsus Bombastus von Hohenheim, for he wrote almost always in German. But I shall speak in another place of Paracelsus from a more important point of view.[1] His philosophy was what we call to-day natural philosophy, and this doctrine of Nature living with ideas, which agrees so mysteriously with the German mind, would have at that time fully developed itself among us, had not, by accidental influence, the lifeless, mechanical physics of the Cartesians usurped a general sway. Paracelsus was a great charlatan, and always wore a scarlet coat, breeches, stockings, and hat, and

[1] The contributions of Paracelsus to the German language, and the number of new words and expressions which he added to it, were very far from being unimportant.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

declared that he could make *homunculi*, or little men; at least he was in confidential relations with occult beings who dwell in different elements, but he was also one of the most profound natural philosophers, who, with the heart of a true German investigator, understood the pre-Christian popular faith or the German Pantheism, and what they did not know they shrewdly guessed.

I should really speak here also of Jacob Böhme, for he also employed the German language for philosophic demonstration, and has in this respect been highly praised. But I could never make up my mind to read him (I do not like to be made a fool of). I much suspect that the admirers of this mystic wish to mystify the multitude. As for what his works contain, St. Martin has given something of them in French. The English have also translated him. Charles I. had so high an opinion of this theosophical shoemaker that he himself sent a scholar to Görlitz to study him. This messenger was luckier than his master, for while the latter lost his head by Cromwell's axe, the former at Görlitz only lost his wits through Jacob Böhme's philosophy.

As I have stated, Christian Wolf first introduced with success the German language to philosophy. His lesser merit was his systematising and making popular the ideas of Leibnitz. Both have been greatly blamed, and we must

Digitized by Google

incidentally refer to the cause. His systematising was all mere show and sham, and the most important portion of the philosophy of Leibnitz was sacrificed to it—that is, the best part of the doctrine of Monads. Leibnitz, it is true, left behind him no systematic edifice, but only the ideas for one. It required a giant to put together the colossal squared stones and stupendous columns which a giant had quarried from the deepest caves of marble and magnificently hewn. Truly that would have been a grand temple! But Christian Wolf was of very humble stature, and could only master a portion of the materials, and of these he built a paltry little tabernacle of testimony, or an ark of the covenant of deism. Wolf's head was more of the encyclopædic than of the systematic order, and he only understood the unity of a doctrine under the form of completeness. He was satisfied with a certain panel or framework in which the panels were most admirably arranged, perfectly fitted, and provided with legible labels; so he gave us an Encyclopædia of Philosophic Sciences. That he, the descendant of Descartes, had inherited the grandfatherly form of mathematical demonstration is a matter of course. I have already censured this form as used by Spinoza. Through Wolf it caused much mischief. In the hands of his pupils it degene-

Digitized by Google

mics. Biblical exegesis and Church history were entirely set aside.

A pupil of Spener's, Hermann Franke, began to deliver lectures in Leipzig after the example and in the spirit of his master. He delivered them in German—a service which we always repay gratefully. His success aroused the envy of his colleagues, who in consequence made life bitter for our poor pietist. He had to quit the field and retire to Halle, where he taught Christianity by word and deed. His memory will there be ever green, for he is the founder of the Orphans' Asylum of Halle.

The university of Halle was soon filled with pietists, and they were called the Orphan Asylum party, a term which, by the way, still exists. Halle is also still the molehill or head-quarters of the pietists, and their quarrels with the Protestant Rationalists a few years ago raised a scandal which spread its foul odour through all Germany. Happy Frenchmen who heard nothing of it all! Even the existence of those evangelical clack-and gossip journals, in which the pious fishwives of the Protestant Church lustily abuse one another, is unknown to you. Happy Frenchmen! who have no idea how maliciously, how pettily, how disgustingly our evangelical priests can slander one another! You know that I am no dependant on Catholicism. In my present religious convictions

Digitized by Google

lives no longer the dogma, yet ever the *spirit*, of Protestantism.[1] I therefore always take part with the Protestant Church, yet I owe it to truth to say that in the annals of Papistry I never found such detestably mean trash as in the *Berlin Evangelical Church Journal* when the scandal referred to became public. The most cowardly monkish malice, the pettiest intrigues of cloisters, are noble acts of benevolence compared to the deeds of Christian heroism which our Protestant orthodox and pietists practised against the hated

[1] In the French edition there is given, instead of this sentence, the following :—

"Le protestantisme fut pour moi plus qu'une religion, ce fut une mission ; et depuis quatorze ans, c'est pour ses intérêts que je combats contre les machinations des jésuites allemands. Plus tard, il est vrai, s'éteignit ma sympathie pour le dogme et je déclarai franchement, dans mes écrits, que tout mon protestantisme ne consistait plus que dans le fait d'être inscrit comme chrétien évangélique sur les régistres de la communion luthérienne. . . . Mais une secrète prédilection pour la cause qui nous fit jadis combattre et souffrir demeure toujours dans notre cœur, et mes convictions religieuses d'aujourd'hui sont encore animées de l'esprit de protestantisme."

It must be admitted that, however interesting or entertaining it may be to follow our author through the astonishing variety of Hebrew, Christian, Hellenic, Sentimental-Catholic, Pantheistic, Deistic, Naturalistic, Atheistic-Protestant opinions which he entertains, either consecutively or simultaneously, it is extremely difficult to understand what he ever did believe in. As the Scotchman said of the haggis, "There's a vara great deal o' fine confused feedin' aboot it." *Au fond*, Heine believed in anything which gave him an opportunity to say something clever.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

Rationalists. You Frenchmen have no idea of the hatred which is developed on such occasions. The Germans are altogether more vindictive than the Latin races.[1]

This comes because we are Idealists even in hating. We do not hate one another for external trifles, like you, as, for instance ruffled vanity, or an epigram, or a visiting-card not returned. No, we hate in our enemies the deepest, the most essential part in them—that is, thought itself. You French are frivolous and superficial, in love as in hate. We Germans hate fundamentally, utterly, and enduringly, for we are too honourable and too clumsy to revenge ourselves with vapid perfidies, and so hate to our last breath. "Oh, I know, Monsieur, what this German calm is," said a lady lately, while she with staring eyes looked at me incredulously and in anxious fear.[2] "I know that you Germans use the same word for forgiving and poisoning." And in fact she was right, for the word *Vergeben* means both.

[1] One of the sayings which, uttered by a great writer, obtained undeserved acceptance. Heine himself was indeed implacably vindictive, as is shown by his revenge on Platen. But to compare the German with the Italian or Spaniard, or the more vulgar class of Americans, in this respect, is to compare burning straw to red-hot steel.

[2] "In dem sie mich mit gross geöffueten Angen ungläubig und *beängstigt* ansah." This is given very differently in the French version as "en me regardant de tous ses yeux et d'un sourire incrédule."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

If I am not mistaken, the orthodox of Halle, in their conflict with the hermit-like pietists,[1] called to their aid the Wolfian philosophy; for religion, when it can no longer burn us alive, comes to us begging. But all our gifts bring her but little gain. The mathematical, demonstrative garment, wherewith Wolf had clothed poor Religion so lovingly, fitted her so badly that she felt still more cramped, and in this strait made herself still more ridiculous. The bad sewing burst everywhere, exposing her person, and it was especially the shameful part—original sin—which displayed itself in its most glaring nakedness. Here no logical fig-leaf availed.[2] Christian-Lutheran original sin and Leibnitz-Wolfian optimism are intolerable. The French persiflage of optimism did not much displease our orthodox. The wit of Voltaire came to the aid of naked original sin, but the German Pangloss had lost a great deal by the destruction of optimism, and sought long for a doctrine equally consoling, until the Hegelian utterance, "All which is, is reasonable," brought him some consolation and amends.

[1] "Mit den eingesiedelten Pietisten," from *einsiedeln*, to live as a hermit. In the French version these are called "les piétistes *émigrés*," the translator having confused *einsiedeln* with *ansiedeln*, to settle down as a colonist or immigrant.

[2] In the French version, "Les feuilles de vigne philosophiques n'y purent rien." The shade of the fig-tree is, in this instance, superior to that of the vine.

Digitized by Google

But from the instant when a religion seeks support from philosophy, its ruin is inevitable. It seeks to defend itself and sinks even deeper into destruction. Religion, like every other form of absolutism, should be above justification. Prometheus is chained to the rock by the power of silence. Æschylus does not suffer power personified to speak a word; it must be silent. As soon as religion prints a reasoning catechism, or a political absolutism publishes an official newspaper, both come to an end. And therein is our triumph; we have involved our enemies in a discussion, and they must speak.

It is indeed not to be denied that religious as well as political absolutism has found very powerful organs to express their opinions. Yet let us not be afraid for that. If the Word lives, dwarfs may carry it; if it is dead, no giant can uphold it.[1]

And since religion, as I have observed, sought assistance from philosophy, innumerable experiments were tried upon her by German savants. It was thought advisable to rejuvenate her, and to do this they went to work much after the manner of Medea in doing the same to King Æson. At first they opened her veins, and all the superstitious blood was very slowly extracted; or, to speak without a simile, an attempt was made to

[1] This paragraph is wanting in the French version.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

take from Christianity its historical element, and only retain the moral portion. Thus they made of it a pure deism. Christ ceased to be an equal ruler with God; he was, so to speak, mediatised, and only found honourable recognition as a private person. His moral character was praised as being beyond all measure, and men could not find language to describe what an admirable person he was.[1] As for his miracles, people explained them by natural causes, or, better still, kept as quiet as possible regarding them. "Miracles," said some, "were needed in those ancient days of superstition, and an intelligent man who had any truth to announce used them as an advertisement." Those theologians who cut out everything historical from Christianity were called Rationalists, and against them was united all the wrath of the pietists as well as that of the orthodox, who from that time quarrelled less among themselves, and were indeed often allied; for what love could not effect, hate brought about—the mutual hatred of the Rationalists.[2]

This direction in the Protestant theology began with the tranquil Semler, whom you do not know, who attained an anxious eminence with the lucid

[1] "Welch 'ein braver Mensch er gewesen sei."

[2] In the French version "cette *réforme* de la theologie protestante," the translator evidently believing that *Richtung*, direction, setting right as allied to correcting *e.g.*, *richten* to correct, also meant reform!—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

Teller, of whom you are ignorant, and reached its summit with the shallow[1] Bahrdt, by wanting whose acquaintance you lose nothing. The most vehement impulses came from Berlin, where Frederick the Great and the bookseller Nicolai held sway.

As to the first, who was crowned Materialism itself, you are well instructed. You know that he wrote French verses, played the flute very well, won the battle of Rossbach, took a great deal of snuff, and only believed in cannon. Some of you have certainly visited Sansouci, and the old invalid soldier who is a castle-guard has shown you in the library the French novels which Frederick, when crown-prince, read in church-time, and which he had bound in black morocco to make his stern parent believe that he was reading a Lutheran hymn-book. You know this royal sage, whom you have called the Solomon of the North. France was the Ophir of this Solomon, whence he imported his poets and philosophers, for whom he had a great predilection, like that Solomon of the South, who, as you may read in the Book of Kings, chap. x., had brought to him from Ophir whole ship-loads of gold, ivory,

[1] "Mit dem seichten Bahrdt." In the French version "Bahrdt au front *d'airain*." *Seichtkopfig*, shallow-brained. It is possible that some confusion of brain or head, and of *seiche* with *seigern*, "to refine metals," suggested this singular translation, which was, however, perfectly applicable to Bahrdt.

Digitized by Google

poets and philosophers.[1] Having such preference for foreign talent, Frederick the Great could not, of course, exercise any all too great influence on the German mind. He insulted, and, moreover, weakened German national feeling. The contempt with which he treated our literature may even now vex us, his descendants. With the exception of old Gellert, not one German man of letters ever received from him aught of his all-gracious good-will or favour. His interview with this poet is very curious.

If Frederick the Great mocked without supporting us, yet were we supported all the more by the bookseller Nicolai, which in no wise prevented us from mocking and deriding him. This man was all his life long unwearied in work for the good of his fatherland, sparing neither pains nor money wherever he hoped to do good, and yet there was never in Germany a person so cruelly, so inexorably, so crushingly ridiculed and abused as he was. And yet, though we, the later-born, know very well that old Nicolai, the friend of enlightenment, was perfectly right in the main, and though we are also perfectly aware that it was chiefly our own enemies, the obscurants, who

[1] In the French version the passage referred to is here quoted in Latin from the Vulgate, Kings, l. i. 22, "Classis regis per mare, cum classe Hiram semel per tres annos ibat, deferens inde aurum et argentum, et dentes elephantorum, et simias et pavos."

Digitized by Google

ridiculed him into his grave, still we cannot think of him with altogether serious faces. Old Nicolai sought to effect in Germany what philosophers had done in France, which was to make the past vanish from the minds of the people; also an admirable prefatory work, without which no radical revolution can take place. The trouble was lost, for he was not cut out for the work. The old ruins stood as yet far too firmly, the spectres of the past flitted out and mocked him, and then he grew furious and struck out blindly, and the lookers on laughed when the bats hissed and entangled themselves in his well-powdered peruke. And it sometimes happened that he mistook windmills for giants, and fought them, but it was far worse when he many times mistook real giants for mere windmills, as, for instance, a Wolfgang Goethe. Against his *Werther* he wrote a satire in which he most rudely perverted every meaning of the author. And yet he was right in the main, and if he did not understand what Goethe meant to express by *Werther*, he at least understood what its effect would be, the debilitating dreaminess, the feeble fanaticism, the fruitless sentimentalism which this romance brought forth, and which was in hostile contradiction with every healthy and reasonable sentiment, such as we really require. And in this Nicolai agreed perfectly with Lessing, who

Digitized by Google

wrote to one of his friends the following opinion as to Werther:—

"Do you not think that a brief cold conclusion would be advisable to prevent such a fiery production from doing more harm than good? A few hints as to how Werther became such an eccentric character, or how another youth whom Nature gifted in the same way could guard himself? Do you believe that a Greek or Roman youth would have taken his own life in such a manner and for such a cause? Certainly not. They knew how to guard themselves from the visionary follies of love, and in the time of Socrates they would have hardly forgiven a young country-maid such an ἐξ ἐρωτος κατοχη inspired by τι τολμαν παρα φυσιν. To produce such petty-great, contemptibly valuable originals was reserved for a Christian education, which alone could transform a bodily need so beautifully into a spiritual perfection. Therefore, dear Goethe, add yet another chapter to conclude, and the more cynical the better."

Friend Nicolai really published a *Werther* travestied according to these recommendations. In his version the hero is not killed, but only spattered with chicken's blood, with which the pistol had been charged. Werther is made ridiculous, lives, marries Charlotte — in fact,

Digitized by Google

ends more tragically than in the original by Goethe.[1]

The journal which Nicolai founded was called *Die Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek*, or the "Universal German Library," in which he and his friends waged war on superstition, Jesuits, court-lackeys, and the like, with great vigour. It cannot be denied that many a blow meant for absurd belief fell by sad fate on poetry itself. Thus Nicolai fought against the liking for old German popular ballads.[2] But, in fact, he was right here too, for, with many a merit, those songs had innumerable associations which were not in keeping with the age, and those old sounds, "the call to the cows" of the Middle Ages,[3] might easily entice popular feeling back into the cattle-pen of the past. He sought, like Ulysses, to stop the ears of his companions, so that they might not hear the song of the sirens, and never heeded that they thereby also became deaf to the notes of the nightingale. So that the field of the present could be radically cleared of weeds, the practical man cared little if the

[1] It is a remarkable coincidence that in an American Algonkin legend, a sorcerer by the same trick makes people believe that he has killed himself, and then returned to life.—*Translator.*

[2] As did Cobbett, who enumerates them among the incomprehensible or absurd follies of collectors.

[3] *Kuhreigen*, the *ranz des vaches*, which so fascinates the Swiss.

Digitized by Google

flowers went with them. Against this the party of flowers and of nightingales, and therewith all else belonging to it, such as beauty, wit, grace, and gaiety, rose in enmity and poor Nicolai was laid low.

To-day matters are changed in Germany, and the party of flowers and nightingales is closely connected with the Revolution. The future is ours, and the day-spring of victory is already dawning. Should this bright beautiful day ever pour its light over our whole country, then we will certainly think of thee, old Nicolai, poor martyr of reason! We will bear thy ashes to the German pantheon, the sarcophagus surrounded by a rejoicing triumphal procession, and accompanied by a chorus of musicians, among whose wind instruments there shall be none which hiss;[1] we will lay on thy coffin the most admirable of laurel crowns, and do our best not to laugh while doing so.

As I would give an idea of the philosophic and religious relations of that time, I must here mention those thinkers who were more or less actively associated with Nicolai, and at the same time formed a *juste milieu* between philosophy and literature. They had no settled system, but a settled and determined direction. They were like

[1] *Querpfeife*, i.e., *cross-pipes*. In English slang the word *quer* has become "queer," while cross is its synonyme.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

the English moralists in their style and their fundamental principles. They wrote without observing any scientifically strict form, and moral consciousness was the only source of their knowledge. Their tendency is altogether the same as that which we find among French philanthropists. In religion they were rationalists, cosmopolites in politics, in morals noble, virtuous men, severe as to themselves, and tolerant to others. As regards ability, Mendelssohn, Sulzer, Abt, Moritz, Garve, Engel, and Biester were the most distinguished among them. Of these, I prefer Moritz, who communicated much of value in experimental psychology. He was a man of charming naïveté, but was little understood by his friends. His biography is one of the most important records of his time. Mendelssohn has, however, among them all, pre-eminent social importance. He was the reformer of his co-religionists, the German Jews; he overthrew the authority of the Talmud, and founded pure Mosaic culture. This man, who was called by his contemporaries the German Socrates, and whom they admired for his nobility of soul and strength of intellect, was the son of a poor sacristan of the synagogue of Dessau. Over and above this defect of birth, Providence had loaded him with a hump-back, as if to show the mob in rough fashion that men should be judged not by outer seeming, but by inner value. Or did Providence bestow it on

Digitized by Google

him with foresight, so that he might attribute to it much ill-treatment by the vulgar multitude, for which a wise man can easily find consolation?

As Luther had overthrown the Popedom, so did Mendelssohn the Talmud, and that in the same manner, since he destroyed the tradition, proclaimed the Bible as the source of religion, and translated the most important portions of it. Thus he destroyed Jewish-Catholicism, as Luther had the Roman. In fact, the Talmud is the Catholicism of the Jews. It is a Gothic cathedral, which is indeed over-loaded with child-like grotesque ornament, yet it amazes us with its heaven-soaring giant-grandeur. It is a hierarchy of religious laws, which often treat of the drollest, most ridiculous subtleties, and yet they are so intelligently arranged over and through one another, sustaining and aiding mutually, and coincide with such tremendous logical force, that they constitute a formidable and colossal whole.

After the fall of Christian Catholicism, that of the Jews or the Talmud was also doomed. For the Talmud had then lost its meaning; it had served as a bulwark against Rome, and the Jews owe this to it, that by its aid they resisted Christian Rome as heroically as they had the Rome of Paganism. Not only did they resist—they conquered. The poor Rabbi of Nazareth, over whose dying head the heathen Roman wrote

Digitized by Google

the mocking words, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews,"—even this mock-king of the Jews, crowned with thorns, and clad with ironic purple, became at last the king of the Romans, and they had to kneel before him. As heathen Rome had been, so Christian Rome was conquered, and even made tributary. If you, dear reader, will go during the first days of any quarter to the Rue Lafitte, No. 15, Paris, you will there see before a high portal a heavy coach, from which will step a very weighty man. He will go upstairs into a little room, where sits a blonde young man, who is, however, older than he looks, yet in whose aristocratic, grand-seigneur-like nonchalance there is something as solid, as positive, as absolute as if he had all the money in the world in his pocket. And he really has all the money of this world in his pocket, and he is called Monsieur James de Rothschild, and the stout man is Monsieur Grimbaldi, ambassador of His Holiness the Pope, and he brings in his name the interest of the Roman loan—the Roman tribute.

What is the use of the Talmud now?

Moses Mendelssohn, therefore, deserves great praise for overthrowing this Jewish Catholicism, at least in Germany. For whatever is superfluous is injurious. Though overthrowing the tradition, he endeavoured to strictly maintain the Mosaic ceremonial law as a religious duty. Was

Digitized by Google

it timidity or shrewdness? Was it a lingering melancholy love, which restrained him from laying destructive hands on objects which were holiest to his ancestors, and for which the blood and tears of so many martyrs had been shed? I do not think so. Like the monarchs of matter, so the sovereigns of the spirit must be impitiable as to family feelings; even on the throne of thought there should be no yielding to tender sentiments. I am therefore of the opinion that Moses Mendelssohn saw in pure Mosaism an institution which might serve deism as its last defence and final fort; for deism was his innermost faith and his deepest conviction. When his friend Lessing died, and was accused of having been a Spinozist, he defended him with the most restless zeal, and because of it grieved himself to death.

I have here mentioned for the second time a name which no German can utter without its being more or less re-echoed in his heart. For since Luther, Germany has brought forth no greater or better man than Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. The two are our pride and our joy. In these sad troubled times, we raise our eyes to their consoling images, and they nod to us a glorious promise. Yes, there will come the third man who will perfect what Luther begun, what Lessing continued, and what the Fatherland so much requires—the third liberator! I see already

Digitized by Google

shining from afar his golden armour gleaming through the imperial purple mantle, "even like the sun through morning's rosy glen."

Lessing had his effect like Luther in this, that he not only did something definite, but that while he moved the German people to their depths, he developed a healthy intellectual action by his criticism and polemics. He was the living *critic* of his time, and his whole life was polemics. This criticism manifested its influence in the remotest realms of thought and of feeling, in religion, science, and art, while his *polemic* conquered every foe and grew stronger with every victory. Lessing, as he himself confessed, needed strife for the proper development of his intellect. He was like the legendary Norseman, who inherited the talents, knowledge, and power of the men whom he killed in duels, and who was thus in time gifted with all possible advantages and virtues. It is intelligible enough that such a battle-loving Kempe[1] made not a little noise in calm, still Germany, wherein the Sabbath stillness was deeper even than that of to-day. The many were dumbfounded by his literary daring, but this stood him in good stead, for *oser!*—be bold!—is the secret of success in literature as

[1] *Kämpe.* This is Low German for Kämpfer, a warrior. The Norse *Kempe* was used in England till the fourteenth century, perhaps later. "With Kempes many a one."

Digitized by Google

well as in revolution or in love. All trembled before the sword of Lessing; no head was safe from him; in fact, he decapitated many from mere wantonness, and was then wicked enough to lift the head from the ground and show the public that it was hollow. Those whom he could not slay with the sword, he slew with the arrows of his wit.[1] His friends admired the coloured feathers in these arrows, his foes felt them in their hearts. The wit of Lessing was not at all like that *enjouement*, that *gaieté*, those sparkling sallies, such as are known here. It was no French greyhound who runs after his own shadow; it was much more like a great German tom-cat, which plays with the mouse before she strangles it.

Yes, polemics were the joy of our Lessing, therefore he never deliberated long whether his opponent was worthy of him. So he by his war-

[1] In the French version, "celui que sa logique tranchante ne pouvait atteindre il le tuait avec les traits de son esprit." These passages are extremely characteristic of Heine, who far surpassed any modern, or indeed ancient author, excepting perhaps Carlyle, in admiring and desiring mere power for its own sake, and in regarding it as the *summum bonum* of the individual. The character of Lessing, as here described and praised for sheer wanton cruelty, is worse than that of the Red Indian who inflicts death with torture only on his enemies. But manners and morals have improved since Heine wrote, and a writer who, inspired by personal ill-feeling or injured vanity, would hunt down a rival is now regarded, be his genius what it may, with little favour.

Digitized by Google

fare preserved from oblivion many names who well deserved it. Round many a tiny writer did he spin the wittiest mockery and most precious humour, and they are preserved for eternity in the works of Lessing like insects in a lump of amber. By killing his enemies he made them immortal. Who among us would else have ever heard of that Klotz on whom Lessing lavished so much scorn and keen wit? The masses of rock which he cast on this poor antiquary and wherewith he was crushed are now his indestructible monument.

It is remarkable that this, the wittiest man of Germany, was also the most honourable. There's nothing equal to his love of truth. Lessing never made the least concession to lies, even when he by so doing could, in the usual fashion of the worldly-wise, aid in the victory of truth. He could do everything for truth except lie. As he himself once said, "The man who will present truth to us in all kinds of masks and paints may indeed be her pander, but never her lover."

That fine expression of Buffon, "Style is the man himself,"[1] is applicable to no one more than to Lessing. His manner of writing is entirely like his character, true, firm, without ornament, beautiful and imposing from indwelling strength.

[1] In the French version, "Le style est tout l'homme." It is generally cited as "Le style c'est l'homme."

Digitized by Google

His style is altogether like that of Roman architecture, the most perfect solidity with extreme simplicity; the sentences rest one on the other like squared stones, and as in the one the law of weight, so in the other that of logical consequence is the invisible power which binds and connects the whole. Therefore there are in his prose so few of the expletives and artistic turns which we use like mortar in constructing sentences; and still fewer are those caryatides of thought which you call *la belle phrase*.

That a man like Lessing could never be happy may easily be conceived; and even if he had not loved the truth, and even if he had not voluntarily defended it everywhere, he must still have been unhappy, because he was a man of genius. "Everything will be forgiven you," said of late a sighing poet, "wealth, illustrious birth, personal beauty, even talent—but there is no mercy for genius." Ah! and even if ill-will did not encounter it from without, genius would find in itself the enemy which destroys it. Therefore the history of great men is always a martyrology; when they did not suffer and make war for great humanity, they did it for their own greatness, for the great order of their being, for the un-Philistine, for their dislike of pompous vulgarity, the ridiculous troubles of their surroundings, a trouble which drives them naturally to extravagances—for example, to the

Digitized by Google

theatre, or even to the gambling-house, as happened to poor Lessing.[1]

Scandal could reproach him with nothing worse than this, and we learn from his biography that pretty comediennes seemed to him to be more amusing than Hamburg clergymen, and that silent cards were more entertaining than twaddling Wolfians.

It rends the heart to read how destiny denied to this man every joy, and how he was not even permitted to enjoy in domestic life rest from his daily conflicts. Once fate seemed to favour him, and gave him a beloved wife and a child; but this prosperity was like the sun-ray which falls on the wings of a bird as it flits by. His wife died in child-bed, the child also soon after birth, and regarding this he wrote to a friend the grimly-witty words:—

"My joy was but short, and I lost him unwillingly, this son! For he had so much intelligence — so much intelligence! Do not think that my few hours of paternity have made me a foolish monkey of a father.[2] I know what I am saying. Was it not intelligent that he so promptly perceived that things went badly in this

[1] In the French version "malaise qui les porte facilement aux extravagances, par exemple, aux *actrices* ou au jeu, comme il arriva au pauvre Lessing."

[2] In allusion to the fable of the ape and her young.

Digitized by Google

world when he was drawn forth into it with iron pincers? Was it not clever of him to seize the first opportunity to escape from it? I wanted for once to be happy like other men. But it went ill with me."

There was a misfortune of which Lessing never complained to his friends; this was his terrible isolation, his spiritual solitude. Some of his contemporaries loved him, none understood him. Mendelssohn, his best friend, defended him with zeal when he was accused of Spinozism. Defence and zeal were both as ridiculous as they were superfluous. Rest in thy grave, old Moses; thy Lessing was indeed on the way to that awful error, that lamentable misery of Spinozism, but the Highest, whose home is in heaven, saved him betimes. Be calm! thy Lessing was no Spinozist, as slander asserts; he died a good deist, like thee and Nicolai and Teller, and the Universal German Library.

Lessing was only the prophet who, grasping the meaning of the second Testament, set forth the third. I have called him the one who continued Luther, and it is really in this character that I must here discuss him. Of his influence and significance as to German art I shall speak anon. In this he not only by criticism but by example effected a healthy reform, and it is this side of his work which is most exalted and elucidated.

Digitized by Google

We, however, regard him from another point of view, and his philosophic and theologic battles are for us of more importance than his *Dramaturgy* and his *Dramata*. The last, however, have, like all his writings, a social significance, and "Nathan the Sage" is in fact not only a good comedy, but also a philosophic-theological treatise in favour of pure deism. Art was for Lessing a tribune; and when he was cast out of the pulpit or the chair, then he leaped upon the stage, and there spoke more significantly than ever, and attracted more hearers.

I say that Lessing continued Luther. After Luther had freed us from tradition and raised the Bible to being the only source of Christianity, there sprung up, as already set forth, a stiff dry worship of the text, and the letter of the Bible ruled as tyrannically as tradition had before. Lessing contributed chiefly to deliverance from this tyrannic letter. And as Luther likewise was not the only one who fought tradition, so Lessing did not fight alone, but was the most vigorous against the letter. Here his war-cry sounded loudest; here he swung his axe most joyously, and it shone and slew. But here he was most closely pressed by the black bands, and in such stress he once cried—

"O sancta simplicitas! But I am not yet where the good man who cried this could do

Digitized by Google

naught else but cry it. (These were the words of Huss at the stake.) First let us be heard, first let us be judged by those who can and will hear and judge!

"Oh, that he could do it, he whom I would most gladly have for my judge—Luther!—thou great man misunderstood, and by none more than by the stubborn stupid, who, bearing thy slippers in hand, saunter crying aloud, yet all indifferent in the road which thou hast opened. Thou didst free us from the slavery of tradition; who will free us from the more intolerable yoke of the letter? Who will bring us at last a Christianity such as thou wouldst teach, such as Christ himself would teach?"

Yes, the letter, said Lessing, is the last crust of Christianity, and not till it is broken away can the spirit come forth. This spirit is, however, nothing else but what the Wolfian philosophy sought to demonstrate, what the philanthropists felt in their souls, what Mendelssohn found in Mosaism, what Freemasons sung and poets piped; in a word, what was then developing itself in every form in Germany—that is, pure deism.

Lessing died in Brunswick in the year 1781, misunderstood, hated, and decried. In that same year appeared in Königsberg *Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft*—the "Critique of Pure Reason"—by Immanuel Kant. With this book, which,

Digitized by Google

owing to a strange delay, did not become generally known for eight years, began in Germany a spiritual revolution which has the most marvellous analogy with the material Revolution of France, and which must appear to a profound thinker quite as important. It develops itself with the same phases, and a most remarkable parallelism appears in both. On both sides of the Rhine we see the same breach with the past; all respect is denied to tradition; as in France every right, as in Germany every thought, has been obliged to justify itself. And as the monarchy, the key-stone of the old social order of things, fell here, so fell there deism, the key-stone of the spiritual ancient régime.

We will speak in the following book of this catastrophe, which was the 21st of January of deism. A strange dread, a mysterious reverence, does not permit us to write further to-day. Our breast is filled with terrible compassion; it is the ancient Jehovah himself preparing for death.[1] We have known him so well from his cradle upwards, in Egypt, where he was brought up among sacred calves, crocodiles, holy onions, ibises and cats. We have seen him as he bid adieu to these playmates of his childhood and obelisks and sphinxes, and became a small god-king in Palestine to

[1] In the French version, "c'est le vieux du ciel lui-même qui se prepare à la mort."

Digitized by Google

a poor pastoral people, and dwelt in his own temple-palace. We saw him later when he came into contact with the Assyrian-Babylonian civilisation, and laid aside his all too human passions, and no longer belched wrath and vengeance, at least no longer thundered for every trumpery trash of sin.[1] We saw him emigrate to Rome, the capital, where he renounced all national prejudices and proclaimed the heavenly equality of all races, and with such fair phrases formed an opposition to the ancient Jupiter, and intrigued so long that at last he rose to power, and from the Capitol governed the state and the world, *urbem et orbem*. We saw how he spiritualised himself more and more, how he sweet-saintly wailed when he became a loving father, a universal friend of humanity, a benefactor of the human race, a philanthropist. It all availed him naught.

Hear ye the bell ring? Kneel down! they bring the sacrament to a dying God!

---

[1] *Lumperei*, literally blackguardism. *Lump* means a rag or a blackguard; hence in the French version *vetille*.

Digitized by Google

FIRST PART.—BOOK THIRD.

FROM KANT TO HEGEL.

THERE is a story that an English mechanic, who had already invented the most artistically ingenious machines, hit upon the idea to make a man, and that it finally succeeded. This work of his hands could bear and behave itself perfectly like a man; it even had in its leathern breast a kind of human feeling, which did not differ greatly from the usual feelings of Englishmen. It could communicate its emotions in articulate tones, and the rustle and buzz of the inner wheels, rasps, and screws,[1] when heard, had the very intonation of pure English pronunciation; in short, this automaton was a perfect gentleman, and all that he wanted, to be a real man, was a soul. But this the English mechanic could not give him, and the poor creature having come to the consciousness of his imperfection, tormented his creator night and day, begging him for a soul. This entreaty became so intolerable,

[1] French version, "Rouages, ressorts et échappements."

Digitized by Google

that the artist at last fled in fear from his own work. But the automaton followed him at once by extra-post to the Continent, travelled constantly after him, caught him many times unexpectedly, and snarled and growled at him, "*Give me a soul!*"[1] We meet these two forms in every country, and those who know what their mutual relations are, understand their strange haste and anxious irritation. But when their peculiar conditions are known, one finds in it something common enough, and sees how a part of the English people, weary of its mechanical existence, demands a soul, while the other, agonised by this constant request, flies here and there, neither being able to remain at home.

This is a terrible tale. It is dreadful when the bodies which we have created demand a soul of us. But more horrible, appalling, and uncanny is it when we have made a soul which demands from us its body, and persecutes us with this prayer. The thought which we have formed is such a soul, and it leaves us no repose till we have given it a body, or till we have hurried it on to sensible realisation. The thought will become deed, the word flesh. And, wonderful! man, like God in the Bible, has only to express his thoughts, and a world forms itself; there is light or dark-

[1] It is hardly necessary to inform the English reader that this story is a *résumé* of Mrs. Shelley's "Frankenstein.'

Digitized by Google

ness, the waters are divided from the dry land, and wild beasts of the earth appear. The world is the signature of the Word.

Mark this, ye proud men of action! Ye are nothing but the unconscious under-workmen of the men of thought, who have often in modest silence prescribed for you all your work in the most determined and detailed manner. Maximilian Robespierre was nothing but the hand of Jean Jacques Rousseau, the bloody hand which drew from the womb of Time the body whose soul Rousseau had formed. The restless anxiety which embittered the life of Jean Jacques came perhaps from this, that he presented in his spirit what a midwife his thoughts needed to come forth bodily to life.[1]

Old Fontenelle was perhaps in the right when he said, "If I had all the thoughts[2] in the world in my hand, I would take care not to open it." For my part, I think differently. If I had all the thoughts in this world in my hand, I would perhaps beg you to cut it off, and in any case I would not keep it long closed. I am not fitted or born to be a jailer of thoughts. By God, I'd let them go! Let them assume the most doubtful or serious forms, let them storm in wild Bacchantic trains through every land, let them

[1] All of this paragraph is wanting in the French version.

[2] In the French version "toutes les vérités du monde."

Digitized by Google

strike down with thyrsus-staves our most innocent flowers, let them burst into our hospitals and drive from its bed our old sick world—of course my heart would sorrow sadly, and I too would suffer, for, alas! I myself belong also to this old sick world, and the poet has said with justice, "We walk no better for abusing our crutches!" I am the sickest of you all, and the more to be pitied because I knew what health is. But ye, O men to be envied! know it not. Ye are capable of dying without knowing it yourselves. Yes, many of you died long, long ago, and declare that your real life is now just beginning. When I contradict such madmen, then they are angry and revile me, and, horrible! the corpses spring up round me and curse me; and what is more loathsome to me than their curses is their churchyard smell. . . . Away, ye spectres, for I speak now of one whose name has the power of exorcism—I speak of Immanuel Kant!

It is said that night-wandering ghosts are terrified when they see the sword of an executioner. But what terror must they then feel if any one holds out at them Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason"? This book is the sword with which deism was decapitated in Germany.

To tell the honest truth, ye French in comparison with us Germans are tame and moderate. At best you could only kill a king, and he had

Digitized by Google

lost his head long before you chopped it off. And over that you needs make such a drumming and shouting and foot-stamping, that it shook all the earth. One really does too much honour to Maximilian Robespierre when we compare him to Immanuel Kant. Maximilian Robespierre, the great cockney of the Rue Saint-Honoré, had of course his fit of destruction when it came to the kingdom, and he twitched frightfully enough in his regicidal epilepsy; but as soon as the question was of the highest being, he wiped the white foam from his mouth and the blood from his hands, and put on his blue Sunday-coat with its shining buttons, and moreover stuck a bouquet before his broad waistcoat collar.

The history of the life of Immanuel Kant is hard to write, inasmuch as he had neither life nor history, for he lived a mechanically ordered, an abstract old bachelor life in a quiet retired street in Königsberg, an old town on the north-east border of Germany. I do not believe that the great clock of the cathedral there did its daily work more impassionately and regularly than its compatriot Immanuel Kant. Rising, coffee-drinking, writing, reading college lectures, eating, walking, had all their fixed time, and the neighbours knew that it was exactly half-past three when Immanuel Kant in his grey coat, with his Manilla cane in his hand, left his house-door

Digitized by Google

and went to the lime-tree avenue, which is still called in memory of him the Philosopher's Walk. There he walked its length eight times up and down in every season; and when the weather was threatening or the grey clouds announced rain, his servant, old Lampe, in anxious care walked behind him with a long umbrella under his arm, like an image of Providence.

Strange contrast between the external life of the man and his destroying, world-crushing thoughts! In very truth, if the citizens of Königsberg had dreamed of the real meaning of his thought, they would have experienced at his sight a greater horror than they would on beholding an executioner, who only kills men. But the good people saw nothing in him but a professor of philosophy, and when he at his regular hour passed by, they greeted him as a friend, and regulated their watches by him.

But if Immanuel Kant, the great destroyer in the world of thought, went far beyond Maximilian Robespierre in terrorism, he had many points of resemblance to him which challenge comparison between the twain. Firstly, we find in both the same inexorable, cutting, prosaic, sober sense of honour and integrity. Then we find in them the same talent for mistrust, which the one showed as regarded thoughts and called it criticism, while the other applied it to men,

Digitized by Google

and entitled it republican virtue. But there was manifested in both, to the very highest degree, the type of *bourgeoisie*, of the common citizen. Nature meant them to weigh out coffee and sugar, but destiny determined that they should weigh other things; so one placed a king, and the other a god in the scales. . . .

And they both gave exact weight!

The "Critique of Pure Reason" is Kant's chief work, and we must occupy ourselves chiefly with it. None of his other writings are of such importance. This book, as I have mentioned, appeared in 1781, and first became known in 1789. It was at first quite neglected; only two trifling notices of it were published, and it was long before the attention of the public was drawn to this great work by articles from such men as Schütz, Schulz, and Reinhold. The cause of this delayed recognition lies without doubt in the strange form of the work and its bad expression. As regards the latter, Kant deserves more blame than any other philosopher, and all the more when we consider his preceding better style. The recently published collection of his minor works contains his first efforts, and we are amazed over them at his excellent and often witty writing. While Kant had his great work in his head, he hummed these essays like little airs. He seems to smile like a soldier arming himself for a con-

Digitized by Google

flict in which he is sure to conquer. Among these little pieces are especially remarkable the "Universal Natural History" and "Theory of Heaven," which were written so early as 1755,[1] "Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime," written ten years later, as well as the "Dreams of a Spirit-Seer," full of caprices in the style of French essays. The wit of a Kant, as it reveals itself in these little writings, has in it something extremely peculiar. Wit there twines round the thought, and though not strong, attains thereby to a pleasing height. Without such support the best wit cannot flourish; it is like the grape-vine, which without a prop must creep miserably on the ground, and decay with its precious fruit.

But why did Kant write his "Critique of Pure Reason" in such a grey, dry, wrapping-paper style? I believe because he feared, in abandoning the mathematical form of the Descartes-Leibnitz-Wolfians, that learning would lose something of its dignity if it expressed itself in a light, attractive, and cheerful tone. Therefore he gave his style a stiff, abstract form, which coldly repulsed all familiarity from the lower classes of intellect. He wished to aristocratically distinguish himself from the popular philosophers of his time, who aimed at bourgeois simplicity, so he clothed

[1] In the French version "Théorie sur le Sentiment du Ciel."

Digitized by Google

his thoughts in a cold court-chancellor language. Here the Philistine spirit shows itself completely. Yet it may be that Kant needed for his carefully measured path of ideas a language even more carefully meted out, and he was unable to make a better. Only genius has for new thoughts the new word. But Immanuel Kant was no genius; and being conscious of this defect, Kant became, like the good Maximilian, more distrustful of genius, and in his critique of the faculty of judgment he even declared that genius has nothing to do with science, as its sphere of action lies in that of art.

Kant did much harm by the unwieldy, stiff-buckram style of his work, for imitators without intellect or vivacity aped him in his external form, and so there sprang up the superstition that a man could not be a philosopher and write well. However, the mathematical form can never, since Kant, reappear in philosophy; he broke its staff without mercy and for ever in the "Critique of Pure Reason." "The mathematical form," he said, "produces nothing but card-houses in philosophy, just as the philosophical form in mathematics develops mere idle talk." For there can be no definition given in philosophy, as in mathematics, where the definitions are not discursive but intuitive—that is, can be demonstrated to perception—while what are called definitions in philosophy are only presented experimentally and hypothetic-

Digitized by Google

ally, the real and correct definition only appearing at the end as a result.

How is it that philosophers show such a predilection for the mathematical form? It began even with Pythagoras, who indicated the principles of things with numbers. This was a thought inspired by genius. All that which is sensible and finite is concisely given in a number, and yet it indicates something determined, and its relation to something determined, which last, if also characterised by a number, assumes the same character of the spiritualised and infinite. Herein number is like ideas, which have the same character and the same relation to one another. One can set forth with numbers in a very striking manner ideas as they manifest themselves in our soul and in nature, but the number always remains the number of the idea, and not the idea itself. The master understands this difference, but the scholar forgets it, and so transmits to other pupils only numerical hieroglyphics, mere ciphers, whose living meaning is lost, yet which are chattered with pedantic pride. This applies also to other elements of the mathematical form. The intellectual in its eternal action endures no fixation; it will no more allow itself to be fixed by number than by the line, triangle, square, and circle. Thought can neither be numbered nor measured.

As it is my task to facilitate the study of Ger-

Digitized by Google

man philosophy in France, I chiefly discuss those externals which always repel the ignorant beginner; and I specially call the attention of writers who would bring Kant before the French public, that they omit that part of his philosophy which only serves to combat the absurdities of the Wolfian philosophy. This controversy, which shows itself everywhere, can only cause confusion to a French reader, and profit him nothing. I hear that Dr. Schön, a learned German in Paris, is busy with a French edition of Kant. I have too favourable an opinion of the philosophical views of this writer to believe that he has need of any such suggestion, and I expect from him a book both useful and important.[1]

The "Critique of Pure Reason" is, as I have said, the chief work of Kant, and his other writings may be regarded as such as can be passed by, or considered simply as commentaries on it. What social meaning lies in this chief work may be found in the following remarks.

Philosophers had, before Kant, reflected on the origin of knowledge, and took, as we have seen, two different paths, according to their choosing ideas *à priori* or *à posteriori*, but less was reflected on the cognitive faculty, or that of knowledge itself, and the comprehension of our power of

[1] The last two passages are wanting in the French version. —*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

knowing, or its limits. This was the task of Kant; he submitted our faculty of knowledge to a pitiless search; he sounded all the depth of this faculty, and determined all its limits. Thus he found, of course, that we can know nothing at all about many things with which we once thought we were most intimately acquainted, which was very vexatious, and yet it is always advantageous to know what the things are of which we can know nothing. He who warns us against ways which lead to nothing does us a good service as the man who sets us on the right path. Kant proved that we know nothing of things as they are in and for themselves, and that we can have no knowledge of them except so far as they are reflected in our own soul. We are, therefore, quite like the prisoners of whom Plato speaks so sadly in the seventh book of his "Republic." These wretches, chained neck and leg, so that they cannot turn their heads, sit in a dungeon which is open above, so as to give them some light. But this light comes from a fire which is burning above and behind them, and which is separated from them by a little wall. Along this wall people walk, bearing all kinds of statues and images of stone or wood, and conversing together. But the poor prisoners can see nothing of these men, who are not so high as the wall, and though the statues rise above it, they only see of these the shadows which pass along

Digitized by Google

the wall before them. Therefore they take these shadows for the objects themselves, and, deceived by the echo of their dungeon, believe that what they hear are the voices of the shadows.

The previous philosophy, which had run about sniffing at things, to collect and classify their characteristics, ended when Kant appeared. He led back investigation into the human soul itself, and examined what was in it. Therefore it was with reason that he compared his philosophy with the method followed by Copernicus. In old times, when the world was made to stand still and the sun to turn round it, astronomical calculations went wrong; but when Copernicus reversed this arrangement, all went admirably. And once, reason, like the sun, circulated round the world of phenomena, and sought to enlighten it; but Kant bade the sun of reason stand still, and it obeyed him, and the world of phenomena turned around it, and was enlightened according to the measure in which it came within its sphere.

From the few words with which I have indicated Kant's task, every one will understand that I consider that part of his book in which he treats the so-called noumena and phenomena as the most important of all. Kant here makes a difference between the appearances of things and the things in themselves. Since we can only know anything of things so far as they appear to us, and as they

Digitized by Google

do not manifest themselves as they are, in and for themselves, Kant named things as they appear *phenomena*, and things in and for themselves *noumena*. We can only know something of them as the former, nothing of them as the latter. Noumena are purely problematic; we can neither say that they exist or do not. Yes, the word *noumen* is only placed in antithesis to *phænomen*, to be able to speak of things so far as they are knowable by us without exercising our judgment on things which are not to be known.

Kant therefore has not, like many teachers whom I will not name, divided things into phenomena and noumena, into things which exist for, and those which do not exist for us. This would be an Irish bull in philosophy. He only wished to give a conception of their limits.

God is, according to Kant, a *noumen*. Therefore, according to his argument, that transcendental ideal being whom we have hitherto called God is nothing but an invention. It arose from a natural delusion. Yes, Kant shows how we can know nothing of that noumen or God, and how all future proof of his existence is impossible. We write the Dantean words, "Leave hope behind," over this portion of the "Critique of Pure Reason."[1]

[1] In the French version the Italian original, *Lasciate ogni speranza*, is given. The reader may here observe that all of Heine's comments on German philosophers, as indeed on all

Digitized by Google

I believe that the reader will willingly excuse me from giving the popular disquisition of that part where the author treats of "principles of the proof of speculative reason deducing the existence of a highest being." Though the real refutation of these proofs takes small space, and does not occur till in the first half of the second volume, it is introduced from the first with the utmost foresight, and forms one of the main points of the book. It is connected with the Critique of all Speculative Theology, and there the last airy images of the deists perish. I must remark that Kant, while attacking the three principal proofs of the existence of God, that is to say, the ontological, cosmological, and physico-theological, in my opinion destroys the last two, but not the first. I do not know whether these terms are known here, and I give the passage from the "Critique of Pure Reason" where Kant formulises their distinction.

"There are only three possible proofs of the existence of God by speculative reason. Every road which one can take with this intention must begin either from determined experience and the thereby recognised special adaptability of the world of sense, and rise from it according to the

writers, are to be invariably taken with a great deal of the salt of caution and distrust. The majority of the students of Kant, that is to say, of men who are far more deeply familiar with his works than was our author, utterly dissent from this conclusion of atheism.—*Translator*.

Digitized by Google

laws of causality to the supreme cause out of and above the world, or they have for basis only undetermined experience, that is, an existence, or else they make abstraction of all experience, and conclude altogether *à priori* from mere ideas as to the existence of a highest cause. The first proof is the psycho-theological, the second the cosmological, and the third the ontological. More there are not, and more can never be."

After reading Kant's principal book several times, I thought that I recognised that the conflict against these persisting arguments for the existence of God lurks everywhere in them, and I would treat of them more fully were I not restrained by a religious feeling. When any one begins to discuss the existence of God, I experience at once such a painful and anxious feeling, such an unceasing misery as I once felt in London, in New Bedlam, when I, surrounded by lunatics, lost sight of my guide. "God is all which is," and to doubt as to him is doubt of life itself and death.

And just so much as the discussion of the existence of God is blamable, so much the more praiseworthy is the meditation on the nature of God. This meditation is a really divine service; our soul is abstracted by it from the transitory and finite, and is rapt away to a consciousness of the primal goodness and eternal harmony.

Digitized by Google

This consciousness thrills through human feelings in prayer or in contemplating church symbols; the thinker experiences this holy state of mind when practising that sublime intellectual power which we call reason, and whose highest task it is to seek into the nature of God. Peculiarly religious men occupy themselves with this task from childhood; they are mysteriously impelled to it by the first stir of reason.[1] The author of these pages is conscious that he possessed most genially such an early, original religious feeling, and it has never left him. God was ever the beginning and the end of all my thoughts. If I now ask, "What is God? what is his nature?" so as a little child I inquired, "How is God? what does he look like?" And then I could look all day long up into heaven, and was much troubled in the evening because I had never seen the holiest face of God, but always only grey, imbecile caricatures of clouds. And I was utterly confused with fragments of astronomy, which, during the rage and age of enlightenment, even the smallest children were not spared, and I could not sufficiently wonder that all these thousand millions of stars were earth globes as great and as beautiful as ours, and that over all this shining swarm of worlds there ruled a single God. I

[1] The end of this paragraph and the whole of the two which follow are wanting in the French version.

Digitized by Google

remember that once in a dream I saw God, far on high in the remotest distance. He smiled cheerfully out of a little heavenly window, a pious and aged face with a small Jewish beard, and he threw out much seed-corn, and the grains as they fell from heaven out into the endless space extended till they became real light-gleaning, blooming, inhabited worlds, every one as great as ours. I could never forget that face. I often again in my dreams saw the cheerful old man throwing the world-seed down from his little heavenly window. I once even saw him cluck with his lips as our maid did when she threw the hens their barley. I could only see how the grains expanded to great shining world-balls, but the great hens, which perhaps were watching somewhere with open beaks to be fed with the world-balls, I could not see.

You smile, dear reader, at the great hens. Yet this childish idea is not too remote from the conceptions of the maturest deists. To give an idea of the God beyond the world, the East and West have exhausted themselves in childish hyperboles, and the imagination of deists has tormented itself in vain with the infinitude of space and time. Here there is shown all their weakness, the nothingness of their views of the creation, and their ideas of the nature of God. It troubles us but little when these ideas are destroyed; and

Digitized by Google

this suffering Kant really inflicted on them by destroying their proofs of the existence of God.

Even the saving of the ontological proof would not avail deism much, for it is as available for Pantheism. To make myself more clearly understood, I remark that the ontological proof of it is that which Descartes adduces, and which was uttered long ago in the Middle Age by Anselm of Canterbury in a touching prayer. Yes, one may say that St. Augustin gave the ontological proof in his second book *De Libero Arbitrio.*

I refrain, as I have said, from any popular expounding of the Kantian polemic against those proofs. I content myself by declaring that deism since then has vanished from the realm of speculative reason. This funeral news will perhaps require some centuries to become generally known, but we have long been in mourning for it. *De profundis.*

You think perhaps that we can go home now! Not yet; by my soul! there is another piece to be played. After the tragedy comes the farce. Immanuel Kant has hitherto appeared as the grim inexorable philosopher; he has stormed heaven, put all the garrison to the sword, the ruler of the world swims senseless[1] in his blood; there is no more

[1] The following is here in the French version: "Vous voyez étendus sans ire les gardes-du-corps ontologiques, cosmologiques et psycothéologiques, la déité elle-même privée de demonstration a succombé."

Digitized by Google

any mercy, or fatherly goodness, or future reward for present privations; the immortality of the soul is in its last agonies—death rattles and groans! And old Lampe stands by with his umbrella under his arm as a sorrowing spectator, and the sweat of anguish and tears run down his cheeks. Then Immanuel Kant is moved to pity, and shows himself not only a great philosopher, but a good man. He considers, and half good-naturedly and half ironically says—

"Old Lampe must have a God, or else the poor man cannot be happy; and people really ought to be happy in this world. Practical common-sense declares *that*. Well, *meinetwegen*, for all I care, let practical reason guarantee the existence of a God."

And in consequence of this argument, Kant distinguishes between theoretical reason and practical reason, and with the latter, as with a magic wand, revives the corpse of deism, which theoretical reason had slain.[1]

Did Kant undertake this resurrection out of love to old Lampe or for fear of the police? Or did he really act from conviction? Or did he, after destroying every proof of the existence of a God, really wish to show us how dangerous

[1] French version, "il ressuscite le Dieu que la raison théorique avait tué."

Digitized by Google

and doubtful it is, if we can know nothing of the existence of God? Therein he managed as wisely as did my Westphalian friend, who, after he had broken and extinguished all the street-lamps in the Grohnderstrasse in Göttingen, delivered unto us, standing in darkness, a long lecture on the practical necessity of the lamps which he had theoretically smashed, to show us that without them we could see nothing.

I have already mentioned that the "Critique of Pure Reason" caused no sensation whatever when it appeared. It was not till several years had passed, and after several intelligent philosophers had written regarding it, that it excited the attention of the public. Then, in 1789, nothing else was heard of in Germany save the Kantian philosophy, and it had in abundance to redundance its commentaries, chrestomathies, explanations, criticisms and defences. It is enough to cast a glance at the catalogue of philosophical works, and it will be seen that the innumerable works which then appeared on Kant abundantly indicate the intellectual movement which this one man originated. Some show a foaming enthusiasm, others bitter discontent, many an open-mouthed anticipation of the result of this spiritual revolution. We had outbreaks in the intellectual world, even as you had in the material, and we were as much fired and inspired at the tearing down of ancient

Digitized by Google

dogmatism as you were at the storming of the Bastile. And there were also in our case only a few old invalids who defended dogmatism—that is, the Wolfian philosophy. It was a revolution whereunto horrors were not wanting. In the party of the past, the really good Christians were the foremost in such cruelty; yes, they longed for still greater horrors, that the measure might be full to overflowing, so that the counter-revolution might the sooner come as a necessary reaction. We too had our pessimists in philosophy, as you had in politics; and as there were people in France who declared that Robespierre was only an agent of Pitt, many pessimists went as far by us in self-delusion as to believe that Kant was in secret understanding with them, and had destroyed the hitherto existing proofs of the existence of God, so that the world might see that no one can ever attain to a knowledge of God by means of reason, and that here, too, we must hold to revealed religion.

Kant brought about this great intellectual movement not so much by the contents of his writings as by the critical spirit which pervaded them, and which now penetrated all science. Every branch of learning was inspired by it; even poetry did not escape the influence. Schiller, for instance, was a powerful Kantian, and his views of art are impregnated by the spirit of

Digitized by Google

the Kantian philosophy.[1] Yet this philosophy was very injurious to belles-lettres and the fine arts on account of its abstract dryness.[2] Fortunately it did not get into cookery.

The Germans do not readily yield to emotion, but once under way they press on with the most stubborn perseverance to the end. So we showed ourselves in religion; so we manifested ourselves in philosophy. Shall we be as logically progressive in politics?[3]

Germany had been led by Kant into the philosophic road; so philosophy became a national cause. A brave array of great thinkers sprang up as if by magic from the German soil. And if, as happened in the French Revolution, German philosophy should ever find its Thiers and Mignet, its history will afford remarkable reading, which the German will peruse with pride and the French with amazement.

Among the disciples of Kant, Johann Gottlieb Fichte soon distinguished himself.

---

[1] Campbell, the English poet, also felt this influence, and went to Germany for the purpose of studying the philosophy of Kant.

[2] Where true poetic genius exists, studies which severely discipline perfect it. Heine himself illustrates this.

[3] This, when written, was a wise, far-seeing, or even deeply prophetic remark, for there were few indeed at the time who supposed that overmuch thought would ever be followed by practical action. Heine took the idea from the results of Saint-Simonism.

Digitized by Google

I almost despair of being able to give a correct idea of this man. In Kant we had only to study a book. But here, beside the book, we have also a man to consider—a man in whom thought and mind are one and the same, and in such grand unity did they work upon the world of his time. We have, therefore, not only a philosophy to investigate, but also a character, by which they are equally limited; and to understand the influence of both, we need some sketch of what were the influences of the time. What an extensive problem! Certainly we may be held excused should we here give but scanty indication.

To begin with, it is very difficult to give an idea of the thoughts of Fichte. Here we come at once to certain difficulties, which concern not only the content, but also the form and method, both being things with which we shall gladly make the stranger acquainted. First of all, the Fichtean method. This was in the beginning taken altogether from Kant, but it was soon changed, from the nature of circumstances. Kant produced only a critique, that is, something negative, but Fichte had later a system, and consequently something positive to put forward. On account of this want of a determined system, many have declared that the philosophy of Kant has no claim to be called a philosophy. So far as Kant himself is concerned they were right, but not as

Digitized by Google

regards the Kantians, who deduced from the treatises and principles of their master an all-sufficient array of well-based systems. In his earlier writings, Fichte, as I said, remained true to the Kantian method, so that his first treatise, which appeared anonymously, might be attributed to Kant. But when Fichte had later set forth a system, he fell into a zealous self-willed passion for construction, and so having constructed a world, he began as earnestly and wilfully as ever to demonstrate from top to bottom how the construction was conducted. In these processes Fichte manifests what may be called an abstract passion. Subjectivity predominates in his manner of teaching as well as in the system itself. Kant, however, lays thought before him, dissects it, analyses it into its finest fibres, and his "Critique of Pure Reason" is at the same time an anatomical theatre of intellect. He himself always remains cold and impassive, like a true surgeon.

As the method, so is the form of Fichte's writings. It is living, but it has all the faults of life—it is restless and confusing. In order to be animated, Fichte scorned the usual terminology of philosophers, which seemed to him to be a dead thing; but he is on this account all the more difficult to comprehend. And he had peculiar fancies on this subject of comprehension. While Reinhold thought as he did, Fichte declared that

Digitized by Google

no one understood him better than Reinhold; but when the latter left his school, Fichte declared that the latter had never understood him. When he differed from Kant, he put it into print that Kant had never understood himself. Here I touch upon a comic point in our philosophers in this, that they incessantly complain that they are not understood. When Hegel lay on his death-bed he said, "Only *one* man ever understood me;" but added immediately after, "and he did not understand me either."

As regards intrinsic value in and for itself, the Fichtean philosophy is of little importance. It has furnished society with no result.[1] Only so far as it is one of the most remarkable phases of German philosophy, only so far as it sets forth the fruitlessness of Idealism in its last deductions, and only so far as it supplies the necessary

[1] As regards these "intrinsic" valuations of Heine, it is almost unnecessary to remark that from the Evolutionary or Darwinian standpoint of pure science, all metaphysical systems whatever, from those of Descartes, or as far back as we please, down to the latest dregs of Hegelianism, are all equally valueless. As regards their importance in influencing current thought and literature or art, that is an entirely different matter. The same may be said of all superstitions, religious laws, or any "spiritual" causes or influences. Heine subsequently very much contradicts himself as regards the assertion that Fichte's philosophy "furnished society with no result." Its influence in its time was very great, and Heine himself declares that it "demolished all the past."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

transition to the natural philosophy or science of the present day, is the Fichtean philosophy of some interest. But as its tenor and substance is rather historical and scientific than socially important, I will give it in as few words as possible.

The problem which Fichte proposed is, "What grounds have we for assuming that conceptions (*Vorstellungen*) of things correspond to things out of us?" And he answers this by saying, "All things only have reality to us in our mind."

The *Wissenschaftslehre* or "Doctrine of Science" was Fichte's chief work, as the "Critique of Pure Reason" had been that of Kant. The one is a continuation of the other. The "Doctrine of Science" leads the soul into itself. But where Kant analysed, Fichte constructs. His book begins with an abstract formula, I = I; it creates and develops the world from the depth of the soul; it brings the separated parts together; it retraces the path to abstraction till it reaches the world of phenomena. This world the mind can therefore understand as the necessary actions or workings of intelligence.

There is also the peculiar difficulty with Fichte that he assumes that the mind observes itself while in action. The "I" considers its own intellectual workings while executing them. Thought watches itself while it thinks, while it gets warmer and

Digitized by Google

warmer to the scalding-point.[1] This operation reminds us of the monkey cooking his own tail in a copper kettle. For he thinks that the real art of cooking consists not only in cooking objectively, but that he shall be also subjectively conscious of the cooking.

It is remarkable that the Fichtean philosophy always had to endure much from satire. I once saw a caricature which represented a Fichtean goose. It had so great a liver that the poor creature no longer knew whether it was goose or liver. On its belly was written I = I. Jean Paul ridiculed the Fichtean philosophy most cruelly in a book entitled *Clavis Fichteana*.[2] That Idealism in its logical deduction should deny the reality of

[1] A process which Heine himself very often unconsciously illustrates, as in this instance, by the needless repetition of an idea till it becomes intolerable. Here we have the simple assertion that the mind observes itself in action given three times in succession.—*Translator.*

[2] Heine never really comprehended that sparrows and wasps pick at the best and ripest fruit, or that a writer who can sting, or render another a laughing-stock for fools, is not on that account the better and greater intellect of the two. All the ridicule directed against Fichte (Richter's included) was of a very stupid and wooden character, not nearly equal to what had been levelled long before at Berkeley, who was also as generally vulgarly misunderstood, and is by some misunderstood to this day. Goethe, to judge by his jests on Fichte in *Faust* and in a letter which Heine quotes, would appear to have had no intelligence of the latter's method, and to have thought that he really denied the reality of matter.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

matter, seemed to the public at large a joke which was carried too far; so we heartily ridiculed the Fichtean *I* which brought forth the whole world of phenomena by merely thinking. Our jesters also made the most of a misunderstanding which became too popular for me to pass it by. The multitude understood that the Fichtean *I* means the *I* of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and that this individual *I* ignored all other existences. "What impudence!" cried the good people; "the man does not believe that we exist—we, who are far more corpulent than he is, and who as burgomasters and official actuaries are by far his superiors." The ladies asked, "But he at least believes in the existence of his wife?" "No." "And Mrs. Fichte puts up with that!"

The Fichtean I is, however, no individual I, but the universal I or Me—that is, the universal I of creation[1] arrived at self-consciousness. The Fichtean thinking is *not* the thought of an individual or of a determinate man who is called Johann Gottlieb Fichte; it is rather a universal thinking which manifests itself in an individual. Thus, as one says "it rains," "it lightens," so Fichte would not say "I think," but "*it* thinks," "the universal thought thinks in me."

In a comparison of the French Revolution with German philosophy, I once, more in jest than in

[1] "Das zum Bewusstsein gekommene allgemeine Welt-Ich."

Digitized by Google

earnest, likened Fichte to Napoleon. But in reality there are here certain striking analogies. After the Kantians had finished their reign of terror and of destruction, Fichte appeared, as did Napoleon after the Convention, and in like manner demolished all the past with a Critique of Pure Reason. Napoleon and Fichte represented the great inexorable *I*, according to which thought and deed are one and the same, and the colossal structures which both erected indicate colossal wills. But by the excesses of this will these buildings soon perished, and the doctrine of Science and the Empire passed away as rapidly as they had risen.[1]

The Empire has now a place only in history, but the impulse which the Emperor caused in the world is still in action, and our present time lives in it. So it was with the Fichtean philosophy. It has quite passed away, but men's souls are still moved by the thoughts which Fichte expressed, and the result of his teaching has been incalculable. If the whole transcendental philosophy was an error, there still lived in Fichte's works a proud independence, a love of freedom, a manly

[1] The parallel between France in material political development and Germany in thought, which forms the *motive* of this book, is worked out with a skill and delicacy which could only have been shown by a poet, and which would probably never have occurred to any poet save Heine. And one of the most brilliant and admirable points of its appearance is this comparison of Fichte to Napoleon.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

dignity, which exerted, especially on youth, a wholesome influence. Fichte's *I* was perfectly in accordance with his unbending, stiff-necked, iron character. The doctrine of such an almighty *I* could perhaps only spring from such a character, and that character must, rooting itself more deeply in such a doctrine, become more inflexible, more unyielding, more iron-like.[1]

What a terror must this man have been to the senseless sceptics, the frivolous eclectics, and the moderates of every line! His whole life was a battle. The history of his youth is a series of sorrows and anxieties, as it is with that of all our great men. Poverty sits by their cradles and rocks them till they are grown up, and this squalid nurse remains their true companion through life.

Nothing is more touching than to see how Fichte, the proud-willed man, tried to torment himself along through life by private tutorship; for he could not find even such pitiable daily bread in his own country, and must go to Warsaw. There the old story repeated; the tutor does not please my lady, or perhaps her lady's-maid; his bows and scrapings are not graceful enough, or not sufficiently French, and he is found incapable

[1] These are true words well spoken, but, as I have remarked, they are in flat contradiction to the author's previous assertion that "the Fichtean philosophy is of little importance, and has furnished society with no result." No man ever had more influence in Germany in his time than Fichte.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

of undertaking the education of a small Polish gentleman. So Johann Gottlieb Fichte is turned away like a lackey, and can hardly get from his master the scanty means of departure. So he leaves Warsaw and wanders to Königsberg, inspired by youthful enthusiasm and a desire to meet Kant. The meeting of these two men is in every respect interesting, and I do not think that I can better set them forth than by giving a fragment from Fichte's diary, which is contained in a biography of him which was recently published by his son.

"On the 25th of July I left for Königsberg with a waggoner, and arrived there on the 1st of August, without having met with anything remarkable. On the 4th I visited Kant, who showed no great warmth in his reception. I, without subscribing, attended his lectures, and was somewhat disappointed, for his delivery is dull or drowsy.

"Meanwhile I write this record:—

"I have desired to have a serious conference with Kant, but found no means of effecting it. At last it occurred to me to write a 'Critique of all the Revelations,' and to send it to him as a letter of recommendation. I began it on the 13th, and have since then worked at it without ceasing. When it was finished, on the 18th of August, I sent the work to Kant, and went on

Digitized by Google

the 25th to learn his opinion of it. He received me with great affability, and seemed to be very much pleased with the treatise. We did not have a formal philosophical discussion; as regarded my doubts, he referred me to his 'Critique of Pure Reason,' and the Court-preacher Schultz, whom I should at once visit. On the 26th I dined at Kant's with Professor Sommer, and found my host a very agreeable and witty man; it was for the first time to-day that I recognised in him the traits worthy of the genius which abounds in his writings.

"*August 27.*—I ended this journal after having made the extracts from Kant's lectures on Anthropology which Herr von S. had lent me. I also resolve to regularly continue this journal every evening before going to sleep, and to set down in it everything interesting which I meet, but especially traits of character and observations.

"*August the 28th, evening.*—I begun yesterday to revise my Critique, and had some really good deep thoughts, but which—more's the pity!—convinced me that my first sketch was utterly superficial. To-day I wished to continue my new investigations, but my imagination was so excited, that I could do nothing all day. In my present condition this is nothing strange! I have reckoned that I can subsist here only fourteen days more. It is true that I have been in such embarrass-

Digitized by Google

ments before, but then it was in my native land, and what with increasing years and a more pressing sense of honour, it *is* harder to endure. I have made no resolution, nor can I come to any. I will not open my heart to Pastor Borowski, to whom Kant sent me; if I must do so, it shall only be to Kant himself.

"On the 29th I went to Borowski, and found him a really good, honourable man. He proposed a condition which is not, however, very certain, and which does not altogether please me, but his frank and open manner drew from me the confession that I was hard pressed for a place. He advised me to go to Professor W. I have not been able to work to-day. The next day I went to W., and then to the Court-preacher Schulz. Chances by the first are not very favourable, but he spoke of a situation as a family tutor in Courland, which only dire need would compel me to accept. Afterwards to the court-preacher, where I was, at first, received by his wife. He appeared afterwards, buried in mathematical circles, but when he heard my name distinctly, he became, owing to Kant's recommendation, all the more friendly. He has an angular Prussian face, but honourable feeling and good-nature itself gleam from every feature. There I also became acquainted with Herr Bräunlich and his *protégés*, Count Dänhof, Herr Büttner, nephew of the

Digitized by Google

Court-preacher, and a young *savant* from Nuremberg, Herr Ehrard, a good and sensible person, but without knowledge of life or of the world.

"On the 1st of September I formed a firm resolution which I would communicate to Kant. A situation as tutor, however unwilling I am to accept it, is not to be found, and the uncertainty of my position hinders me from working at my ease, or from benefiting by social intercourse with my friends; therefore, back again to my home! The small loan which I need for that, I may, perhaps, obtain by Kant's aid. But on the way to him to make this request, my courage failed. I determined to write to him. In the evening I was invited to the court-preacher's, where I passed the time very pleasantly. On the 2nd I finished the letter to Kant, and sent it."

Remarkable as this letter is, I cannot make up my mind to give it in French. I think I feel blushes on my cheeks, and as if I were called on to relate the most delicate family secrets to strangers. Despite my efforts to live in the French way of the world, despite my philosophic cosmopolitanism, old Germany and its bourgeois feeling is always in my heart. Enough! I cannot give that letter, and I merely mention that Immanuel Kant was so poor, that he, notwithstanding the heartrending, touching tone of that letter, could not lend Johann Gottlieb Fichte any money. But

Digitized by Google

the latter was not in the least vexed, as may be inferred from the words of his journal, which we here continue.

"On the 3rd September I was invited to Kant's. He received me with his usual frankness, but said he had not as yet come to any determination regarding my request, and that he would be quite unable to do anything for fourteen days to come. What charming candour! Moreover, he raised difficulties as to my plans, which proved that he does not very well understand our position in Saxony. Now for days I have done nothing, but I will work after this, and leave the rest to God.

"On the 6th I was invited to Kant's house. He proposed to me to sell the publisher Hartung, through Pastor Borowski, my manuscript of the 'Critique of all the Revelations.' When I spoke of revising it he said, 'It is well written.' Can this be true? and yet Kant says so! However, he declined my first request.

"The 10th I was at dinner, the mid-day meal, with Kant. Nothing was said of our affairs. Magister Gensichen was present, and we had a very general and at times very interesting conversation, Kant being always the same to me.

"The 13th I wished to work and did nothing. My disheartenment is too much for me! How will all this end? Where shall I be eight days hence? Then all my money will be spent!"

Digitized by Google

After much wandering, and after a long delay in Switzerland, Fichte at last found a firm place in Jena, and from this time his brilliant period begins. Jena and Weimar, two Saxon towns which are only a few leagues apart, were then the centre of intellectual life in Germany. The Court and poetry were in Weimar, in Jena the University and philosophy; in the one the great poets, in the other the great scholars of our country were to be seen. In 1794 Fichte began his course of lectures in Jena. The date is significant, and explains not only the spirit of his writings at that time, but also the trials and tribulations to which he was subsequently exposed, and to which he succumbed four years later. For in 1798 there rose against him the outcry of atheism, which attracted intolerable persecutions, and caused him to leave Jena. This event, the most remarkable in Fichte's life, has a general importance, and I cannot pass it over in silence. And here Fichte's views as to the nature of God are appropriately in place.

In the *Philosophical Journal* which Fichte then published he printed an article entitled "Development of the Idea of Religion," which had been sent to him by a certain Forberg, who was a schoolmaster in Sahlfeld. To this he added a short explanatory treatise with the title "The foundation of our faith in a divine government of the world."

Digitized by Google

The two articles were at once seized by the Government of the Elector of Saxony[1] under the accusation of atheism. At the same time there was sent from Dresden to the court of Weimar a requisition enjoining the severe punishment of Professor Fichte. The Court of Weimar would not, of course, let itself be led astray by any such demand, but Fichte on this occasion made the greatest blunders. For he addressed an appeal to the public without license from the proper authority, which was the cause that the Government of Weimar, displeased and under external pressure, could not well avoid inflicting a mild reprimand on the professor who had been so inconsiderate in his expressions. But Fichte, who believed himself to be altogether in the right, would not calmly submit to such reprimand, and left Jena. To judge by his letters, he was very much pained by the conduct of two men whose official positions made them very influential in his affair, and these men were His Dignity the Chief Consistorial Counciller von Herder, and His Excellence the Privy-Counciller von Goethe. But both were abundantly justified. It is touching to read in the posthumous letters of Herder how the poor man had his own troubles and trials with the candidates of theology, who, after having studied in Jena, came before him in

[1] Aursachsischen Regierung.

Digitized by Google

Weimar to undergo examination as Protestant preachers. He dared not ask them a question as to Christ the Son; he was only too glad when they would admit the existence of the Father. As for Goethe, he expresses himself as follows in his Memoirs on this subject:—

"After the departure from Jena of Reinhold, who was justly regarded as a great loss for the Academy, Fichte was boldly, or rather audaciously, invited to take his place. This professor had set forth his views with grandeur, but not always with tact, regarding the most important affairs of morals, manners, and state. He was one of the ablest individuals ever seen, and there was nothing to blame in his opinions regarded from a higher point of view; but how could he get on on equal terms with a world which he regarded as his own creation and possession?

"As he had been limited regarding the time which he wished to appropriate for lecturing on week-days, he undertook to deliver them on Sundays, which attempt found many hindrances. The little and great annoyances which resulted from all this were hardly allayed and alleviated, not without inconvenience to higher authorities, when his declarations as to God and Divine things, in which he had better have kept silent, attracted from without annoying agitation.

"Fichte had ventured in his *Philosophic Jour-*

Digitized by Google

nal to express himself regarding God and things Divine in a manner which seemed contradictory to that usually employed. He was blamed, and his defence in no way bettered the affair, because he went passionately to work, never suspecting how much kind feeling existed in his favour, although people knew so well how to interpret his thoughts and words. This they could not of course say to him straightforwardly, and quite as little that one wished ever so little to aid him out of the difficulty. Arguing for and against, surmising and declaring, confirmations and resolutions, fluctuated in many uncertain contradictory speeches at the Academy; there was question of a Ministerial remonstrance, and of nothing less than a reprimand which Fichte was to expect. At this, losing all self-control, he thought himself justified in addressing a passionate memorial to the Ministry, in which he, assuming that the report of a reprimand was authentic, declared with petulance and defiance that he would never endure it; that he would rather, without further delay, leave the Academy, and that in such a case not only would he resign, but with him several other distinguished professors.

"After this, of course, all good-will regarding him was checked—yes, paralysed. Here there was no way out, no intermediation possible, and the mildest course was to give him without delay

Digitized by Google

his dismissal. And it was not till the matter was past mending that he learned the turn which would gladly have been given to it, and he was obliged to regret his rash haste, as we did also."

Is not all this the Ministerial, smoothing-over, hushing-up Goethe to the very life? All which he blames in his heart is that Fichte did not express himself more gradually. He does not blame the thoughts, but their words. That deism had been destroyed in the German world of thought since the time of Kant was, as I have said, a secret known to every one, and yet a secret which must not be cried in the market-place. Goethe was no more of a deist than was Fichte, for he was a Pantheist, but it was precisely on the heights of Pantheism that Goethe could perceive the indefensibility of the Fichtean philosophy, at which a smile must have passed over his gentle lips. To the Jews, who are in the end all deists, Fichte must have been a torment; to the great heathen he was only a folly.[1] The Great Heathen is the

[1] What does not appear to have struck Heine as most discreditable to all concerned in this affair of Fichte is the fact that, among all his dear and distinguished friends, there was not one, according to Goethe's declaration, to tell him plainly how affairs stood. There was "too much delicacy . . . one could not of course speak to him straightforwardly;" so he was allowed to believe himself to be friendless and oppressed, till the catastrophe came, "and then we were all *so* sorry!"

Digitized by Google

name applied in Germany to Goethe, but it is not altogether appropriate. The heathenism of Goethe is marvellously modernised. His strong heathen nature shows itself in clear sharp conceptions of all external appearances, all colours and forms; but Christianity has at the same time gifted him with deeper intelligence; in spite of his struggling resistance, it initiated him into the mysteries of the spirit-world; he has drunk the blood of Christ, and this taught him the most secret voices in Nature, like Siegfried in the Nibelungenlied, who at once understood the voices of the birds when a drop of the dragon's blood had touched his lips. It is wonderful how Goethe's heathen nature was penetrated by our most ancient sentimentalism, how the antique marble beat with a modern pulse, and how he could feel the sorrows of a young Werther as vividly as the joys of an antique Greek god. The Pantheism of Goethe is therefore very different from that of the heathen. To express myself briefly, he was the Spinoza of poetry. All of Goethe's poems are saturated with the same spirit which breathes in the works of Spinoza. That Goethe was utterly given up to the doctrine of Spinoza admits of no doubt. He busied himself with it all his life; he has partly confessed it in the beginning of his Memoirs as well as in the recently published last volume of the same work. I do not remember now where it was that I once

Digitized by Google

read that Herder, vexed at this endless occupation with Spinoza, cried one day, "I wish that Goethe would for once take some other Latin book in hand than that of Spinoza!" But this applies not only to Goethe, but to many of his friends who were subsequently known more or less as poets, and who in their earlier days cultivated Pantheism, and this flourished in German art long ere it ruled among us as a philosophical theory. Even in Fichte's time, when Idealism attained its sublimest height, it was overthrown in the realm of art, and then there arose that art-revolution which is not yet at an end, and which began with the strife of the Romantic and the old Classic régime in the Schlegel uprising.[1]

In fact, our first romantic writers were inspired by a Pantheistic impulse which they themselves did not understand. The feeling, which they believed was a home-sickness for the Catholic Mother-Church, had a deeper source than they dreamed, and their real reverence and prepossession for the traditions of the Middle Age, for its popular superstition, devildom, magic-work, and witch-craft, was all a suddenly awakened but unconscious yearning again for the Pantheism of the old Germans, and what they worshipped in the basely

[1] The words *mit den Schlegel'schen Emeuten* are omitted in the French version.

Digitized by Google

defiled and mischievously mutilated form was really the ante-Christian religion of their fathers. Here I must refer again to my first book, where I showed how Christianity absorbed the elements of the old German religion; how these, with disgraceful transformations, were still retained in popular mediæval belief, so that the old worship of Nature was regarded as mere vile sorcery, the old gods being changed to devils of ugliness, and the chaste priestesses to wild witches. The errors of our early romantic writers should from this point be more gently judged than is usually done. They would fain restore the Catholic condition of the Middle Age, because they felt that in it there were still preserved many of the sacred relics of their earliest ancestors and of the glories of their first nationality. It was these mutilated and dishonoured remains which so sympathetically attracted their feelings, and they hated the Protestantism and Liberalism which both strove to destroy the entire Catholic past.

Of all which I will speak in another place. Here I have only to mention that so soon as in the time of Fichte Pantheism forced itself into German art, that even the Catholic romantic writers unconsciously followed this course, and that Goethe announced it most distinctly. This is to be found even in *Werther*, where he yearns for a rapt and loving identity with Nature. In *Faust* he seeks

Digitized by Google

to ally himself to Nature in a daringly mystical, direct manner. He evokes the secret powers of earth by the magic formulas of the Höllenzwang or Hell-compulsion.[1] But it is in the ballads of Goethe that this Pantheism shows itself most charmingly and purely. Here the doctrine of Spinoza has broken from the mathematical chrysalis, and flutters round us as a Goethean song. Hence the rage of our orthodox and pietists against these poems. They grasp with their pious bear's paws at this butterfly which constantly flies from them; it is so delicately ethereal, so winged with perfume. Ye French can form no conception of it unless you know the language. These Goethean songs have a mocking magic which is

[1] In the French version the following lines are added:—

"Il conjure les forces secrètes de la terre par les formules du Hoellenzwang, livre de magie, qu'on m'a montré un jour dans une vielle bibliothéque de couvent, où il etait enchaîné; le titre reprèsente le roi du feu, aux lèvres duquel pend peu d'un cadenas, et sur sa tête est perché un corbeau tenant dans son bec la bagnette divinatoire."

Heine's identification of Nature and a belief in spirits and fairies, &c., and Pantheism is so often repeated, that it is worth while to observe that Pantheism is properly a result or inference from the former, and is not found at all in the earlier stage. The savage begins by believing that a spirit is in the tree or rock or fountain, and when this extends to everything, some thinker deduces from the belief a conclusion that all is one. That is, Polytheism is the foundation of Pantheism, or its basis, not simply Pantheism itself, although it may live on and in it as a part.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

indescribable. The harmonious verses wind round the heart like a tender true love; the word embraces while the heart kisses thee!

We do not at all perceive in Goethe's conduct to Fichte any of the mean motives which many of his contemporaries set forth in much meaner words. They did not understand the different natures of the two men. The mildest misunderstood Goethe's indifference when Fichte was subsequently hard pressed and persecuted; and they did not see into Goethe's situation. This giant was Minister in a dwarf German state; he could not move naturally or freely. It was said of the seated Jupiter of Phidias in Olympia, that should he stand up, he would burst through the roof. This was quite Goethe's situation in Weimar; if he had suddenly risen from his quietly seated repose, he would have broken through the stategable, or what was more likely, would have hit his head against it. And should he risk this for a doctrine which was not merely erroneous but also ridiculous? The German Jupiter remained quietly seated, and calmly allowed himself to be reverenced and incensed.

It would lead me too far from my subject should I, from the point of the art interests of those times, consider more closely the conduct of Goethe regarding this accusation as to Fichte. In favour of the latter it can only be said that

Digitized by Google

the complaint was really a pretext, and that political persecution lurked behind it. A theologian may indeed be indicted for atheism, because he is in duty bound to teach certain doctrines; but a philosopher has pledged himself to no such obligations, he cannot thus bind himself, and his thoughts are as free as the birds in the air. It is perhaps unjust that I, to spare my own feelings and those of others, do not here cite everything which supports and justifies this accusation. I will here give only one of the doubtful passages from the inculpated essay.

"Living and working moral order is God himself; we need no other God, and can comprehend no other. There is no foundation in reason for departing from that moral cosmos,[1] and, by means of a deduction from effect to cause, assume a special being as that cause. The original understanding certainly does not confirm this deduction and knows no such special being; only a philosophy which misunderstands itself can do so."

As is peculiar to obstinate men, Fichte in his appeal to the public, and in his judicial reply, expressed himself even more hardly and harshly, and indeed with expressions which wound our deepest feelings. We who believe in a real God, who reveals himself to our senses in infinite extension, and to our souls in infinite thoughts—

[1] "Weltordnung."—"Ordre moral de l'univers."

Digitized by Google

we who honour and adore a visible God in Nature, and perceive His invisible voice in our own spirit—we are painfully repulsed by the coarse words with which Fichte declares, even ironically, that God is a mere cobweb of the brain. It is indeed doubtful whether Fichte is inspired by irony or mere madness when he disengages our dear God so absolutely from all material attributes, that he even denies his existence because existence is an idea of the senses, and only possible as such. The doctrine of science, he declares, knows no other existence save the *sensible;* and as a being can only be ascribed to subjects of experience, this predicate cannot be affirmed of God. Therefore the Fichtean God has no existence; he is not; he manifests himself only as pure action, as an order of events, as *ordo ordinans,* as the world or universal law.

In this wise Idealism filtered the Godhead so long through all possible abstractions, till at last nothing of it remained. From this time forth, as with you in place of a king, so with us as regards God, Law alone ruled supreme.

But which is the most absurd, a *loi athée,* a law which has no God, or a *dieu loi,* a God who is only a law?

The Idealism of Fichte is one of the most colossal errors which the mind of man ever

Digitized by Google

hatched out. It is more godless and damnable than the coarsest Materialism. What is here called in France the atheism of the Materialists would be, as I could easily prove, always something morally edifying, something of trusting piety in comparison to the results of the Fichtean Transcendental-Idealism. Thus much I know, that both are detestable to me. Both views are anti-poetic. The French Materialists have written as much bad poetry as the German Transcendental-Idealists. But Fichte's doctrines were never dangerous to the state, and still less did they deserve to be persecuted as politically dangerous. To be misled by this erroneous doctrine a man needs to be gifted with a speculative keenness of intelligence such as is seldom found. This theory of errors was utterly inaccessible to the great mob with its thousands of thick heads. The Fichtean view of God should have been controverted rationally, and not by the police. To be accused of atheism in philosophy was something, too, so strange in Germany, that Fichte at first did not really know what they wanted of him. He remarked very rightly, that the question whether a philosophy was atheistic or not sounded to a philosopher as strangely as if one had asked a mathematician whether a triangle was green or red.

This accusation had, therefore, its secret grounds,

Digitized by Google

and these Fichte soon found out. As he was the most honourable man in the world, we may give full credence to a letter in which he addresses Reinhold as to these concealed causes, and as this letter, dated May 22, 1799, sketches the whole time and the whole dire distress of the man, we will cite something from it.

"Weariness and disgust determine me, as I had declared to thee I would do, to vanish from sight for some years. I was, according to the views which I held, convinced that duty demanded this conclusion, since I can never be heard in the present fermentation, while it would only be made worse; whereas, after a few years, when the first antipathy shall be appeased, I can speak with all the greater energy. To-day I think differently. I dare not be silent now; should I do so, I would never be able to speak again. Since the alliance of Russia with Austria, I have long regarded as probable what is now become certain since the late events, and especially since the horrible murder of the ambassadors (over which people are rejoicing here, and regarding which S. and G. cry out, "Quite right! these dogs should be killed").[1] And this is that in future despotism will defend itself with desperation; that it will attain its aims by Paul and Pitt; that the basis of its plans is to

[1] In the French version "ambassadeurs français," and in place of "S. and G.," "Schiller et Goethe."

Digitized by Google

destroy freedom of thought, and that the Germans will not hinder the execution of them.

"Do not imagine, for example, that the Court of Weimar believes that attendance at the University will be lessened by my presence; they know the contrary all too well. It was obliged to drive me away in consequence of a general plan vigorously carried out by Saxony. Burscher of Leipzig, who is initiated into these secrets, laid so far back as the end of last year a considerable wager that I would be expelled before the beginning of this twelvemonth. Voigt was long since won over by Burgsdorff to take part against me; and it has been made known in the Department of Science (*Department der Wissenschaften*) in Dresden that no one who is devoted to the newer philosophy can be promoted, or, if he has already a place, can be advanced. In the free school of Leipzig, even the expoundings of Rosenmüller are regarded with distrust. Luther's Catechism has been again introduced there, and the teachers are once more confirmed in the symbolic books; and it will go on and spread. . . . In short, nothing is more certain than the most certain, which is, that if the French do not conquer the most overwhelming supremacy and achieve a change in Germany, or in a great portion of it, within a few years, no man who is known to have ever had a free thought will be allowed a place wherein to rest. It is,

Digitized by Google

therefore, to me more than most certain that, if I do find a small corner, I shall be hunted out of it in one or, at most, two years; and it is dangerous to let oneself be chased about to several places, as is shown historically by Rousseau's example.

"But suppose that I keep silence, and do not write the least thing; will I be left in peace under such conditions? I do not believe it; and suppose that I could hope it from royal courts, will not the clergy wherever I go excite the mob against me to stone me, and then beg their Governments to banish me as one dangerous to the public peace? And should I therefore be silent? No, I ought and will not, for I have cause to believe that if anything can be saved of the German spirit, it will be done by my words, and that by my silence philosophy will prematurely perish. I have no confidence that those who will not let me rest in silence will allow me to speak.

"But I will convince them of the harmlessness of my doctrine! Dear Reinhold, how can you suppose that these men will be kind to me? The brighter I become, the more innocent I appear, the blacker are they, and so much the greater will be my real offence. I have never believed that they are persecuting my alleged atheism. What they are hunting down in me is a free-thinker who begins to make himself intelligible (Kant's

Digitized by Google

good luck lay in his obscurity), and a decried democrat. What frightens them like a phantom is the independence which, as they dimly foresee, my philosophy awakens."

I again remark that this letter is not of yesterday, but bears the date of May 22, 1799. The political relations of those times have a disquieting likeness to recent events in Germany, with the difference that then the sense of freedom flourished more among scholars, poets, and other literati, but at present shows itself much less with them, and far more among the great active masses, as of daily labourers and tradesmen. While during the time of the first Revolution a leaden, utterly German drowsiness oppressed the people and ruled like brutal repose in the German land, the wildest fermentation and up-boiling showed itself in the world of letters. The loneliest author who lived in some remotest nook of Germany took part in this movement, almost sympathetically. Without being accurately informed of passing political events, he felt their meaning and expressed it in his writing. This fact reminds me of the large sea-shells which we sometimes place as ornaments on chimney-pieces, and which, however far they may be from the ocean, begin to murmur whenever the tide rises and the waves beat up against the shore. When the Revolution stormed wildly here in

Digitized by Google

Paris in the great human sea, when it raged and roared, the German hearts beyond the Rhine responded to the tumult. But they were so isolated, among mere soulless porcelain teacups and Chinese gods,[1] which mechanically nodded with their heads as if they knew what the matter was. Ah! our poor predecessors in Germany had to atone bitterly for that sympathy with the Revolution. Aristocrats and priests played them their coarsest and vilest tricks. Some of them fled to Paris, where they passed down and away into poverty and misery. I saw not long ago a blind fellow-countryman, who has been ever since those days in Paris. I saw him in the Palais Royal, where he had come to warm himself a while in the sunshine. It was sad to see how pale and thin he was, feeling his way sadly along from house to house. They told me it was the old Danish poet Heiberg.[2] And I have seen the garret in which Citizen George Forster died. A far more cruel fate would have befallen the friends of freedom who remained in Germany had not

[1] Heine has *pagodas*, which he seems to have confused with josses, or deities with moving heads.

[2] Peter Andreas Heiberg, born in 1758 in Denmark, and father of the well-known dramatist, having been banished for political writing, went to Paris, where he was appointed by Napoleon I. to a place in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which he died in 1830. He wrote, in addition to many comedies, a *Precis Historique de la Monarchie Danoise*, Paris, 1820.—*Note by the German Publisher.*

Digitized by Google

Napoleon and his French conquered us. Napoleon certainly never suspected that he had been the saviour of *Ideologie*.[1] But for him, our philosophers with their ideas would have been extirpated by the gallows and the wheel. Yet the German Liberals, too republican to court Napoleon, and too magnanimous to ally themselves to a foreign rule, wrapped themselves in deep silence. They went sadly about with broken hearts and closed lips. When Napoleon fell, they smiled, but sadly, and were silent; they took little part in the popular enthusiasm, which by permission of the higher authorities burst out in Germany. They knew what they knew, and were silent. As these republicans led very chaste and frugal lives, they generally lived to an advanced age, and when the Revolution of July took place, many of them were still alive. Then we wondered not a little when the old odd fellows, whom we had seen straying about so bent up and bashful, all at once held up their heads, smiled gaily at us younger folk, pressed our hands, and began to tell merry tales. I even heard one of them sing, and it was the Marseillaise Hymn, in a coffee-house. Before long we had learned the melody and the beautiful words even better than the old man him-

[1] A favourite term with Napoleon I. Thus Carlyle tells us that he pinched the ear of Professor Teufelsdröckh, and called, or dismissed, him as an *idéologue.—Translator.*

Digitized by Google

self, for he often laughed like a fool in the best strophes or wept like a child. It is always well when such greyheads remain to teach us young ones the old songs. We will not forget them, and some of us will teach them to our grandsons, as yet unborn, but many of us will ere then have perished in German prisons or in garrets in exile.

Let us speak again of philosophy! I have shown how that of Fichte, constructed with the most refined abstraction, still manifests an iron-like inflexibility in its deductions, which rise to the boldest heights. But all at once, one fine morning, we find in it a great change. It begins to be flowery and make queer faces,[1] and becomes tender and modest. The ideal Titan who climbed the ladder of thought to heaven, and who with bold hand felt his way to its vacant chambers, has become bowed and Christian-like, and one who sighs much of love. This is Fichte's second period, which little concerns us. His whole system now undergoes the strangest transformation. At this time he wrote a book which has been recently translated into French, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* —"The Destiny of Man."[2] A similar work, *Anwei-*

[1] "Das fängt an zu blümeln und flennen." In the French version, "elle commence à s'amollir, à devenir doucereuse et modeste."

[2] Heine here quite misrepresents and detracts from the character of this remarkable work, which he had possibly never read. Many regard it as the most characteristic production of its author. It is also remarkable that Heine, with all his fervent

Digitized by Google

sung zum seligen Leben—"Directions for a Happy Life"—belongs to the same period.

Fichte, an obstinate man, as is evident enough, never admitted this grand transformation. He declared that his philosophy was still the same, that his expressions were changed and improved, and that he was misunderstood. He also declared that the *Natur-philosophie*, which rose at that time in Germany, and was beginning to supplant Idealism, was fundamentally his own system, and that his pupil Joseph Schelling, who left him and introduced this philosophy, had only returned his own phrases and enlarged his own old theory by unedifying flat additions.

We come here to a new phase of German thought. We mentioned the names of Joseph Schelling and *Natur-philosophie*,[1] and as the first is here quite unknown, and the expression *Natur-philosophie* or *philosophie de la Nature* is not generally understood, I must explain the meaning of both. Certainly I cannot exhaust the subject in these pages, and we will dedicate another work to the subject. All that we will do here will be to indicate a few urgent errors, and call a little

regard for piety, seems to regard any yielding to it as very shameful.—*Translator.*

[1] "Natural philosophy" does not translate this word, which corresponds to what is called "science" in English. On the other hand, *Wissenschaft* does not mean merely "science," but any accurate knowledge whatever.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

attention to the social importance of the philosophy in question.

And firstly, I would observe that Fichte was not far wrong when he declared that Joseph Schelling's system was really the same as his own, but otherwise formulised and augmented; for Fichte taught, as Schelling did: There is only one being, the *I*, the Absolute; and there is an identity of the ideal and real. Fichte, in the "Doctrine of Science," attempted to intellectually construct the real from the ideal; but Joseph Schelling reversed the process; he endeavoured to construct the ideal from the real. To express myself more clearly, Fichte, proceeding from the assumption that thought and nature are one and the same, arrived by intellectual action to the world of phenomena, creating Nature from thought and the real from the ideal. With Schelling, on the contrary, while he departs from the same beginning, the world of phenomena, or what is perceived by us, becomes pure ideas; Nature becomes thought and the real the ideal. Both these tendencies of Fichte and of Schelling mutually develop one the other to a certain degree. For according to the principle above proposed, philosophy can receive two divisions, in one of which it may be shown how Nature becomes manifest from the idea, and in the other how Nature resolves itself into pure ideas. Philosophy could therefore be divided into Transcen-

Digitized by Google

dental Idealism and Nature-philosophy. Schelling really recognised these two directions, and he pursued the latter in his *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur*—"Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature"—and the former in his *System des Transcendentalen Idealismus*—"The System of Transcendental Idealism."[1]

These works, of which one appeared in 1797 and the other in 1800, are here mentioned because this mutually developing tendency is shown even in their titles, and not because they contain a complete system. Nor is there one in any of Schelling's works. There is not with him, as with Kant and Fichte, a chief work which can be regarded as the central point of his philosophy.[2]

[1] These works, and many more of the same kind from all countries, were translated into French, and extensively read in the "Forties." This was due to the influence of Cousin, the Eclectic, who urged the necessity of studying and comparing all philosophies. He did much good thereby, but Heine never lost an opportunity to ridicule him. And it may be remarked as a singular thing, that Heine never once alludes to the real and direct, and in fact almost the only, benefit which resulted from the study of metaphysics. This was the training, exercising, and disciplining the mind, so as to cause men to think more vigorously and intelligently on all subjects, be they literary, scientific, or practical. While they teach no scientific truths or useful facts, the works of Kant or Fichte are of great value as mental gymnastics; but this is seldom noted.—*Translator.*

[2] The "System of Transcendental Idealism" is, however, generally regarded as setting forth in the main, and to all practical intents and purposes, the philosophy of Schelling.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

It would be unjust to judge Schelling by the contents of a book and by the letter. One should rather read his books chronologically, following the gradual development of his thoughts in them, and then firmly grasp his leading idea. It also seems to me necessary that one shall with him not unfrequently decide where thought ceases and poetry begins; for Schelling is one of those creations to whom Nature has given more inclination to poetry than poetic power, and who, incapable of satisfying the daughters of Parnassus, have taken refuge in the forests of philosophy, and there carry on with abstract Hamadryads the most barren nuptials. Their feelings are poetic, but the instrument, the word, is weak; they seek and strive in vain for form of art in which they may clothe their thoughts and knowledge. Poetry is Schelling's weakness and his force. By it he is distinguished from Fichte, both to his advantage and disadvantage. Fichte is only a philosopher, and his power lies in dialectics and his strength in demonstration. But this is the weak side of Schelling; he lives more in contemplation; he does not find himself at home on the cold and lofty peaks of logic; he gladly flies into the flowery vales of symbolism, and his philosophic strength lies in construction. But this last is a mental power which may be found as often among mediocre poets as in great philosophers.

Digitized by Google

According to this last declaration, it will be understood that Schelling, in that part of philosophy which is purely transcendental idealism, is only a follower of Fichte, and such must remain; but that in the philosophy of Nature, where he carried on his business and housekeeping among flowers and stars, he blooms and shines marvellously. This tendency has been pursued not only by him, but specially by his sympathetic friends, and the vehemence with which this manifested itself was also a poetaster-reaction against the previous abstract mental philosophy. Like schoolboys set free who have sighed all day long in stuffy rooms under the burden of grammar-work and ciphering, they swarmed and stormed away and out into Nature, into the perfumed, sunlit real, and shouted for joy, and threw somersaults, and made a jolly row!

The expression "scholars of Schelling" should nowhere be taken in its exact literal signification. Schelling himself has said that he would only form a school in the fashion of the old poets, or a poetic academy, where no one is bound to any special theory, by any special discipline, but where every one obeys the spirit, and reveals it after his own manner. He might also have said that he founded a school of prophets where the inspired began to prophesy according to freak or fancy, and in any language which they liked. And

Digitized by Google

what the spirit of the master inspired, the youths carried out; the narrowest minds began to prophesy, every one in an unknown tongue, and the result was a great Pentecost in philosophy.

How the deepest meaning and most glorious conceptions may be applied to mumming masquerading, and how a mob of mean knaves and sad jack-puddings are capable of compromising a great idea, may be seen illustrated appropriately by the philosophy of Nature.[1] But the ridicule which the prophetic or poetic school of Schelling attracted to it was not deserved, for the idea of the philosophy of Nature is in reality nothing but the idea of Spinoza or Pantheism.

The doctrine of Spinoza and the philosophy of Nature, as Schelling set them forth in his better days, are essentially one and the same. The Germans, after they had rejected the Materialism of Locke and carried out the Idealism of Leibnitz to its utmost limits, and found it as fruitless, came at last to the third son of Descartes, or Spinoza. Philosophy had now run anew a great

[1] It is also quite as admirably illustrated by Heine's own bitter remarks on it, which give an extremely distorted and exaggerated, if not altogether false, view of the school of Schelling, with its disciples. Here, as in unfortunately too many instances, our author's tendency to sarcasm and ridicule, makes him dwell altogether on trifling defects, and gives us no idea of the real intellectual results of this philosophy and school.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

course, and one may say it found itself just where it was two thousand years before in Greece. But by close comparison of these two cycles a great difference manifests itself. The Greeks had as bold sceptics as we; the Eclectics denied the reality of the external world as decidedly as did our later Transcendental-Idealists, and Plato found as well as Schelling the world of spirit in that of phenomena. But we have an advantage over the Greeks as well as over the schools following Descartes, and that is, we began our philosophical cycle by testing the sources of human knowledge with the "Critique of Pure Reason" by Immanuel Kant.

As regards Kant, I may add to my previous remarks that the only proof of the existence of God which he allowed to remain—that is, the so-called moral proof—was destroyed by Schelling with great *éclat*. But I have already remarked that this proof was of no great strength, and that Kant probably allowed it to remain out of good-nature. The God of Schelling is the God-universe of Spinoza. At least he was that in the year 1801, in the second volume of the *Journal of Speculative Physics*. Here God is the absolute Identity of Nature and of thought, of material and of mind, and this absolute identity is not the cause of the universe, but is also the universe itself; it is consequently the God-universe. In this, in him, there are no opposing elements or divisions.

Digitized by Google

The absolute Identity is also the absolute Totality. A year later Schelling developed his God still more in a paper entitled "Bruno, or of the Divine and Natural Principle of Things." This title recalls the noblest martyr of our doctrine,[1] Giordano Bruno of Nola, of glorious remembrance. The Italians declare that Schelling took his best thoughts from the ancient Bruno, and accuse him of plagiarism. They are wrong, for in philosophy there can be no plagiarism. At last, in 1804, the God of Schelling appeared completely finished in an article entitled "Philosophy and Religion." Here we find the doctrine of the Absolute in perfection, and in it the Absolute is expressed in three formulas. The first is the categorical. The Absolute is neither the ideal nor the real, neither spirit nor matter, but it is the identity of both. The second formula is the hypothetical. When a subject and an object are present, the Absolute is the essential equality of both. The third formula is the disjunctive. There is only *one* being, but this can at the same time, or alternatively, be regarded as entirely ideal or as altogether real. The first formula is quite negative, the second supposes a condition which is harder

[1] This "our" is here interesting. Heine has throughout claimed to be a theist, but has carefully insisted that Kant utterly destroyed every argument in favour of a God, and now proclaims himself a pantheist. *Non nobis*, &c.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

to understand than the proposition itself, and the third is altogether that of Spinoza. "The absolute substance is recognisable either as thought or extension." Schelling, therefore, could advance no further on the road of philosophy than Spinoza, since the Absolute can only be understood under the form of these two attributes, thought and extension. But Schelling here abandons the path of philosophy and seeks to arrive at the perception of the Absolute by a kind of mystical intuition; he tries to penetrate to its central point, to its inmost being, where there is neither anything ideal or real, neither thought nor extension, neither subject nor object, neither spirit nor matter, but—well, I really do not know what.

Here the philosophy of Schelling comes to an end, and his poetry, or rather folly, begins. But it is here that he meets with most sympathy from a multitude of silly fellows, whom it suits admirably to give up calm thought and imitate those whirling dervishes who, as our friend Jules David relates, spin round in a circle till both the subjective and objective world vanish and blend in a blank nothing, which is neither real nor ideal; till they see the invisible, hear the inaudible, or till they hear colours and see tones, and conceive the Absolute.

I believe that the philosophic career of Schelling ends with this attempt to intellectually perceive

Digitized by Google

the Absolute. A greater thinker now comes before us, who has developed the philosophy of Nature to a perfected system, explained by its synthesis the whole world of phenomena, enlarged the great ideas of his predecessors by still greater, carried them through every form of discipline, and has therefore given them a scientific foundation. He is a pupil of Schelling, but a pupil who gradually usurped in the realm of philosophy all the might of his master, and, ambitious of rule, outgrew and finally cast him into darkness. This is the great Hegel, the greatest philosopher whom Germany has produced since Leibnitz. There can be no doubt that he far surpasses Kant and Fichte. He is as acute as the one and as strong as the other, and has, withal, a calm power of construction, a harmony of thought, such as we do not find in Kant and Fichte, because in them a mere revolutionary spirit prevails. Nor is it possible to compare this man with Joseph Schelling, for Hegel was a man of character, and if he did, like Schelling, give the constituted authorities in Church and State certain too significant justifications, it was at least done for a State which, theoretically at least, advocates the principle of progress, and for a Church which regards that of free examination as its vital element. This he did not conceal; he freely avowed his views; but Schelling winds his way

Digitized by Google

worm-like into the ante-chamber of a practical as well as theoretical Absolutism, and he lends a helping hand in the Jesuit cave where chains for the mind are forged; and with all that will impose it on us that he is, all unchanged, the same Child of Light which he always was; he denies his denial, and to the infamy of the renegade he adds the cowardice of the liar.

We cannot conceal it, neither from reverence or prudence. We will not be silent; we say that the person who once most boldly preached in Germany the religion of Pantheism; who proclaimed most boldly the sanctification of Nature and the rehabilitation of man in his divine rights —this teacher became an apostate to his own doctrine; he left the altar which he had himself consecrated; he has slunk back into the stall of the faith of the past; he is now a good Catholic, and preaches an extra-mundane personal God, "who had the folly to create a world." Let the old believers ring away with their bells, and sing *Kyrie eleison* over such a conversion! It proves nothing for their doctrine; it only proves that man turns to Catholicism [1] when he is weary and old, when he has lost his physical and mental strength, and can no longer think and enjoy. So many free-

[1] Instead of "Catholicism," the French version has "que l'homme tourne à la *religion* quand il est vieux et fatigué,"—quite as Heine himself did.

Digitized by Google

thinkers have been converted on their death-beds —but do not boast of it! These tales of conversions belong at best to pathology, and give but indifferent witness for your cause. They only prove, after all, that it was not possible to convert those free-thinkers while they wandered with sound minds under God's free heaven and were as yet in full possession of their intellects.[1]

I believe that Ballanche says that it is a natural law that initiators must die as soon as the work of initiation is completed. Ah! my good Ballanche, that is only half-true, and I would sooner assert that when the work of initiation is at an end the initiator dies or—becomes a renegade. And so it may be that we can somewhat soften the severe judgment which intellectual Germany has passed on Schelling; we may convert into calm pity the severe and strong contempt which lies heavy on him, and explain his apostasy from his own doctrine as a consequence of that law of Nature that he who exhausted all his forces on the expression or execution of a thought must, after he has spoken or acted it out, sink exhausted, either into the arms of death or those of his former foes.

By such explanation we may understand even more startling phenomena of the time which deeply

[1] According to a mediæval Latin adage thus Englished:—
"The devil fell ill, the devil a monk would be;
The devil got well, and the devil a monk was he."

Digitized by Google

disturb us. Through it we may comprehend why men who have sacrificed everything, and battled and suffered for their opinions, even after victory have abandoned their principles and gone over to the enemy. After this declaration I may call attention to the fact that not only Joseph Schelling, but to a certain degree also Fichte and Kant, have been guilty of apostasy. Fichte died betimes, ere his falling off from his own philosophy became too startling, and Kant was also untrue to the "Critique of Pure Reason," since he wrote the "Critique of Practical Reason." The initiator dies or renegades.

I know not how it comes, but this last sentence acts upon my soul so subduingly that I am not just now in the mood to utter certain other harsh truths regarding Schelling. Let us rather praise the Schelling of by-gone days, whose memory blooms for ever in the annals of German thought; for the former Schelling represents, as did Kant and Fichte, one of the great phases of our philosophical revolution, which I have in these pages compared to the political Revolution of France. In fact, if one can find in Kant the terrorist Convention, and in Fichte the newer Empire of Napoleon, we may see in Schelling the restoring reaction which followed it. But it was above all, a Restoration in a better sense, for Schelling restored to Nature its legitimate rights;

Digitized by Google

he strove to reconcile Spirit and Nature; he would unite both in the eternal World-Soul. He restored that great philosophy of Nature which we find among the old Greek philosophers, which was first led by Socrates, more into investigating the human soul itself, and which afterwards ran into the Ideal.[1] He restored that great philosophy of Nature, which, secretly sprouting from the ancient pantheistic religion of Germany, promised in Paracelsus the most beautiful flowers, but which was crushed by the advent of Cartesianism. And—more's the pity! —he at last restored things in which he may be compared in evil sense to the French Revolution. But then public reason would no longer endure him, and he was shamefully cast down from the throne of thought. Hegel, his majordomo, took the crown from his head, and it was shorn, and the deposed Schelling lives since then like a monkling in a city which shows its Popish-parson character in its name, and is called in Latin Monacho-Monachorum.[2] There I saw him wandering about ghost-like, with his great pale

[1] In the French version, "Il restaura cette grande philosophie de la nature que nous trouvons déjà chez les anciens philosophes grecs avant Socrate."

[2] Munich. Its coat of arms represents a monk bearing a book —probably the Decretals. Schelling subsequently went to Berlin.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

eyes and his down-cast apathetic[1] face, a pitiful picture of fallen glory. Hegel let himself be crowned, and—more's the pity!—also oiled a little in Berlin, and since then has reigned in the land of German philosophy.

Our philosophical revolution is ended. Hegel completes the grand cyclus. We have seen since then only the development and perfectioning of the doctrine of the philosophy of Nature. This has, as I said, penetrated into all learning and science, and has produced the most extraordinary and grandest results; and, as I have indicated, much that was not pleasant has also to come to light. These facts—or failures—are so numerous that it would require a book to recount them; and this is the really interesting and most highly coloured part of our history of philosophy. And yet I am convinced that it will be better for the French to know nothing about it all, for such information could only tend to bewilder the heads of the French. Many passages of the philosophy of Nature torn from their connection might do you much harm.[2] This much

[1] "Mit seinem abgestumpften Gesichte." *Abgestumpftheit*, apathy, dulness, bluntedness, from *stumpf*, a stump, a snubbed or short end. Heine hints here at the snub-nose and peculiar physiognomy of Schelling. One writer declares that he was a perfect facsimile of Socrates; an American friend of mine who attended his lectures insisted that the great philosopher looked exactly like a frog!—*Translator.*

[2] The danger here was not, however, that the heads of the French would be bewildered, as that Heine's own would have

Digitized by Google

I know, that had you been familiar four years ago (in 1830) with the German philosophy of Nature, you would never have had the Revolution of July. There was needed for such a deed such a concentration of thought and power, such a noble partiality, a certain virtue, and a certain degree of recklessness, such as only your old school allows. Philosophical perversities which might be employed to plead for Legitimacy and the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation would have chilled your inspiration and checked your courage. I regard it, therefore, as important for the history of the world that your great Eclectic, who then wished to teach you German philosophy, did not understand it in the least. His providential ignorance was salutary for France and for all mankind.[1]

Alas! the philosophy of Nature, which brought forth such glorious fruit in many regions of science, especially in the strictly natural sciences,

been sadly turned by such a task. Natural philosophy or physics was certainly not his *forte*. But the excuse is exquisitely Heine-like. "Ladies and gentlemen, I would gladly explain for you the problems of science, but I really fear they would be too much for your weak minds. *Passons!* the band will now play the Marseillaise!"—*Translator.*

[1] This is in allusion to Victor Cousin, whom Heine never missed an opportunity to ridicule. In the French version this is quite changed, not to give offence to the French, and reads as follows: "Je regarde donc comme un fait très-important dans l'histoire du monde, que certains *missionaires allemands* qui vinrent alors à Paris pour vous enseigner la philosophie allemande, n'en aient compris le premier mot."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

produced in others only the most noxious weeds. While Oken, the most genial thinker and one of the great citizens of Germany, discovered his new "World of Ideas,"[1] and inspired our German youth for the first principles of humanity, for freedom and equality,—ah! at the same time Adam Müller was teaching the stall-feeding of nations like cattle, according to natural philosophical principles, and Görres preached the obscurantism of the Middle Age according to the natural scientific view that the state is a tree, and that it should in its organic distribution also have a trunk, branches, and leaves, as is so admirably set forth in the hierarchy of the corporations of the Middle Ages. About this time Mr. Steffens proclaimed as philosophic law that the peasant class were distinguished from the noble in this, that the peasant was meant by Nature to work without enjoying himself, and the noble privileged to enjoy himself without working. Yes, a few months since, as I am told, an ignorant country squire in Westphalia, a jackfool, I believe, with the name of Haxthausen,[2]

[1] In the French version, "découvrait de nouveaux mondes d'idées." "Like cattle," in the next sentence, occurs only in the French text.—*Translator.*

[2] "Ein Krantjunker in Westphalen, ein Hans Narr, ich glaube mit dem Zunamen Haxthausen." Haxthausen was indeed an aristocrat, but he was not an ignorant boor or *maître-sot*, or even a fool. His great work on Russia fully deserves to be ranked and read with that of Wallace, and it certainly indicates that the author was a man of the world and a scholar.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

published a work in which he petitions the royal Prussian Government to consider the parallelism and its results which philosophy proves in the whole organism of the world, and to draw the political lines closer; for as there are four elements, fire, air, water, and earth, so there are four analogous elements in society—the nobility, clergy, citizens, and peasants.

When such dire follies were seen to burgeon on the tree of philosophy and shoot into poisonous flowers, especially when it was observed that the German youth, lost in metaphysical abstractions, passed unnoticed the most urgent questions of the time, and became unfit for practical life, the patriots and friends of freedom felt a righteous indignation against philosophy, and many went so far as to give it a death-sentence as a vain, worthless beating the air.[1]

We will not be so foolish as to seriously confute these malcontents. German philosophy is a serious affair, which concerns all mankind, and our remote descendants will alone be able to

[1] "Einige gingen so weit ihr als einer müssigen mitzlosen Luftfechterei ganz den Stab zu brechen." In allusion to the old custom of breaking a stick when pronouncing a sentence of death. Alluding to Körte (*Sprichwörter der Deutschen*), this was established by Charles V., and meant death without hope of pardon or reprieve. Heine's French translator, not understanding the expression, gives it as "quelques uns ont été jusqu'à rompre avec elle!"—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

judge whether we are to praise or blame for having first worked out our philosophy, and after that our revolution. It seems to me that such a methodical race as ours must begin with the Reformation, then busy ourselves with philosophy, and finally, after finishing with it, pass on to political revolution. I find this series of succession all in order. The heads which philosophy has used for reflection, the revolution may hereafter chop off as may suit its purposes; but philosophy could have no earthly use for heads which a preceding revolution had decapitated. Let not your hearts be disquieted, ye German republicans; your German revolution will be none the gentler and milder because the "Critique" of Kant, the Fichtean Transcendental-Idealism, and even the philosophy of Nature, preceded it. These doctrines have developed revolutionary forces which only await the day to break forth and fill the world with terror and astonishment. There will be Kantians forthcoming who in the new world to come will know nothing of reverence for aught, and who will ravage without mercy, and riot with sword and axe through the soil of all European life to dig out the last root of the past. There will be well-weaponed Fichteans on the ground, who in the fanaticism of the Will are not to be restrained by fear or self-advantage, for they live in the Spirit. They defy matter, like the early Christians, who

Digitized by Google

were not to be influenced by bodily torture or worldly delights; nay, such Transcendental-Idealists would be in a social revolution more inflexible than those Christians, for they endured earthly martyrdom that they might thereby attain to heavenly bliss, while the Transcendental Idealist regards martyrdom itself as mere appearance, and is inaccessible in the citadel of his own thought. But the philosophers of Nature would be more terrible than all of these, should they practically engage in a German revolution, and identify themselves with the work of destruction. For if the hand of the Kantian strikes strongly and surely, it is because his heart is moved by no traditional regard or respect; if the Fichtean dares all dangers because for him they do not exist in reality,[1] and the philosopher of Nature will be terrible because he will appear in alliance with the primitive powers of Nature, able to evoke the demoniac energies of old Germanic Pantheism—doing which there will awake in him that battle-madness which we find among the ancient Teutonic races who fought neither to kill nor conquer, but for the very love of fighting itself. It is the fairest merit of Christianity that

[1] Heine here falls into the error, which he at one time pointed out, of believing that Fichte taught the absolute non-existence of things in relation to the Me, in which error he was fully equalled by Goethe, Disraeli, and all who have attempted to be funny at Fichte's expense.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

it somewhat mitigated that brutal German *gaudium certaminis* or joy in battle, but it could not destroy it. And should that subduing talisman, the Cross, break, then will come crashing and roaring forth the wild madness of the old champions, the insane Berserker rage, of which Northern poets say and sing. That talisman is brittle, and the day will come when it will pitifully break.[1] The old stone gods will rise from long-forgotten ruin, and rub the dust of a thousand years from their eyes, and Thor, leaping to life with his giant hammer, will crush the Gothic cathedrals! But when those days shall come, and ye hear the stamping and ring of arms, guard ye well, ye neighbours' children, ye French, and put not forth your hands into what we are doing in Germany, for verily evil will come upon you for that. Beware lest ye blow the fire, and take good heed that ye do not quench it; ye can in so doing all too easily burn your fingers. And laugh not at my advice, the advice of a dreamer who warns you against Kantians, Fichteans, and philosophers of Nature, nor at the fantastist who awaits in the world of things to be seen that which has been before in the realm of shadows. Thought goes before the deed as lightning precedes thunder. German thunder is indeed

[1] This sentence is wanting in the French version. It appears to have been left by oversight in the original.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

German, and not in a hurry, and it comes rolling slowly onward; but come it will, and when ye hear it crash as naught ever crashed before in the whole history of the world, then know that *der deutsche Donner*, our German thunder, has at last hit the mark. At that sound the eagles will fall dead from on high, the lions in remotest deserts in Africa will draw in their tails and creep into their royal caves. There will be played in Germany a drama compared to which the French Revolution will be only an innocent idyl. Just now all is tolerably quiet, and if here and there some one behaves in a lively manner, do not believe for that that the great actors have as yet appeared on the stage. They are only the little dogs who run round in the amphitheatre, and bark and bite one another, before the hour begins when the great array of gladiators will enter, and war to the death or for life.

And the hour will come. As on the benches of an amphitheatre, the races will group round Germany to behold the great battle-play. I warn ye then, Frenchmen, keep very quiet, and for your lives do not applaud. We might easily misunderstand it, and in our rude manner teach you roughly to keep quiet; for if we long ago, when in our weary, worn, and servile state, were able to subdue you, we shall have still greater power to do so when in the haughty pride of youthful intoxication

Digitized by Google

of freedom.[1] You yourselves know what a man can do in such condition, and you are no longer in that state. And so beware! I mean you well, and so speak bitter truth. You have more to fear from Germany set free than from all the Holy Alliance with all the Croats and Cossacks. For, firstly, you are not much beloved in Germany, which is almost incomprehensible, for you are really very amiable, and while you were in Germany gave yourselves great trouble to please, at least the better and more beautiful half of our people; but then, if that half did love you, unfortunately it is the one which does not bear arms, and whose good-will would bring you little gain. What it is with which they really reproach you I could never really understand.[2] Once in a beer-cellar in Göttingen a young Old German declared that Germany should take revenge on the French, for Conradin von Hohenstaufen, whom they had beheaded at Naples. You have forgotten about that, long, long ago. But we forget nothing. You will

[1] "Wenn wir früherhin . . . euch manchmal *überwältigen* konnten" in the original is judiciously changed in the French version to "si adis nous avons pu nous *mesurer* avec vous."—*Translator.*

[2] Twenty-two invasions of Germany, the last within the memory of thousands who were living when Heine wrote, accompanied by every excess of murder and ravage, was one of the causes of reproach which he, as he says, "could never really understand."—*Translator,*

Digitized by Google

find that when we shall desire to grapple with you, there will be no want of sound and solid reasons. In any case, I counsel you to be well on your guard. Let happen in Germany what may, whether the Prince Royal of Prussia[1] or Doctor Wirth be dictator, keep your armour on, remain quietly at your posts, weapon on arm. I have kindest feeling for you, and I was almost alarmed when I read lately that your Minister proposed to disarm France.

As, despite your present Romanticism, you are born classics, you know well Olympus. Among the naked gods and goddesses who there make merry over nectar and ambrosia, you may see one goddess who, though surrounded by such festivity and gaiety, ever wears a coat of mail and bears helmet on head and spear in hand.

It is the Goddess of Wisdom.

[1] In the first manuscript this is given as "the Prince of Kyritz."—*German Publisher.*

Digitized by Google

LETTERS ON GERMANY.

LETTER I.

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

You, Sir, not long ago, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, apropos of a criticism against your Frankfort fellow-countrywoman Bettina Ammim, alluded with enthusiasm to the authoress of "Corinne," which was certainly sincere, since you attempted to show how far she surpassed the women-writers of to-day, that is, the *Mères d'église* and the *Mères des compagnons*. I do not share your opinions in this respect, which, however, I will not here controvert, and which I shall everywhere respect, where they do not contribute to spread in France erroneous views as to Germany, its affairs and representatives. It was only with these views that I twelve years ago opposed the work *De l'Allemagne* of Madame de Staël in one of my own, which bore the same title. To

Digitized by Google

this book I attached a series of letters, the first of which shall be dedicated to you.

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

Yes, woman is a dangerous being. I can sing a song about that. Other people have had this bitter experience, and only yesterday a friend told me thereanent a terrible tale. He had met in the Church St. Méry a young German artist, who said to him mysteriously, "You have attacked Madame la Comtesse de —— in a German article, and you are doomed to death should you do so again. *Elle a quatre hommes, qui ne demandent pas mieux que d'obéir à ses ordres.*" Is not that terrible? Does it not sound like a shudder-and-midnight piece by Anne Radcliffe? Is not this woman a kind of Tour-de-Nesle? She only needs nod, and four assassins spring out on you and give you a death-blow, if not physically, at least morally. But how did this lady gain this awful power? Is she so beautiful, so aristocratic, so virtuous, so full of talent that she should exercise such boundless influence on her slaves, and that these should so blindly obey her? No! she does not possess these gifts of nature or of fortune to any too great an extent. I will not say that she is ugly, for no woman is that; but I can with right and reason declare that if Helena of Troy *had* looked like this lady, the whole Trojan

Digitized by Google

war would never have been, the citadel of Troy would never have been burned, and Homer would never have sung the wrath of Pelides Achilles. Nor is she of such noble family, and the egg from which she crawled was not begotten by a god nor hatched out by a queen—that is, in birth she matches not with Helen, being simply sprung from a citizen shopman in Frankfort. Nor are her treasures so great as those which the Queen of Sparta had as dower when Paris, who the cithern sweetly played—pianos had not been invented then—took her away from home. On the contrary, the tradesmen of the lady sadly sigh; her dentist says she owes him for her teeth. Only as regards virtue can she be compared to the famous Madame Menelaus.

Yes, women *are* dangerous; but I must remark by the way that the beautiful in this respect are as nothing to the ugly ones; for the former are accustomed to have men run after them, but the latter run after the men, and thereby accumulate a mighty gang of retainers. This is especially the case in literature. And here I would observe that all the most prominent French women-writers of to-day are very pretty. There is George Sand, author of the *Essai sur le Développement du Dogme Catholique,* and Delphine Girardin, Madame Merlin, and Louis Collet, who all put to shame all the shabby witticisms as to the gracelessness of those daughters

Digitized by Google

of the Graces, the blue-stockings, and who, when we read their writings by night alone in bed, make us long to be able to personally testify our admiration and respect for their genius! How beautiful George Sand is, and how gentle even for those spiteful tabby cats who smooth her with one paw and scratch with the other, or even for the dogs who most furiously bay and bark at her; like the moon in her fulness and glory, she shines down on them! And the Princess Belgiojoso, this beauty who yearns for truth, any man may slander her unharmed; anybody may throw mud on a Madonna by Raffaele; she will not defend herself. And Madame Merlin, of whom not only her enemies, but even her *friends* always speak well, she too, accustomed to respect and honour, hardly knows what the language of rudeness means, and when she hears it, stares in amazement. The beautiful Muse Delphine, when abused, grasps her lyre, and her anger is poured out in a burning, glowing stream of Alexandrines. Say anything insolent of Madame Collet, and she will catch up a kitchen-knife as if to stab you; but there is no real danger. But don't abuse the Countess ——! That done, thou art a child of death, doomed and damned! Four masked ruffians leap out on thee; four *souteneurs littéraires*[1]—that is the Tour-de-Nesle

[1] A terribly severe hit. A *souteneur* is a prostitute's bully,

Digitized by Google

—thou art stabbed, strangled, drowned; the next morning thy corpse will be found in the *Entre-filets* of *La Presse.*

I return to Madame de Staël, who was not beautiful, and who made much trouble for the great Emperor Napoleon. She did not limit herself to writing books against him, but sought to wreak vengeance by non-literary means. She was for a time the soul of diplomatic intrigues, which always anticipated the Emperor, and she well knew how to throw assassins at the throat of her foe, only that these were not *valets*, like the champions of the lady whom I have mentioned, but kings. Napoleon was conquered, and Madame de Staël entered Paris in triumph, with her book *De l'Allemagne* and several hundred thousand ducats which she also brought as a living illustration of her work.

Since that time the French have become Christians and Romanticists and Counts; all of which concerns me not, and a race has well the right to become as wearisome and lukewarm as it pleases, and all the more because it was once the most brilliant in soul and the most heroic which ever

---

the lowest and vilest of mankind, who lives by the earnings of a public woman, and in return intimidates or extorts money from her victims. It was such passages which earned for Heine among his enemies the *sobriquet* of the Pietro Aretino—the *flagellum principum*—of the nineteenth century.

Digitized by Google

fortified and battled here on earth. And still I am somewhat interested in this transformation, for when the French renounced Satan and all his glory, they also abandoned the Rhenish provinces, and I became by this a Prussian. Yes, humbly as the word sounds, I am it—I am a Prussian, by the power of conquest. Only by compulsion, when I could no longer endure it, did I succeed in breaking my ban, since which time I live as *Prussien liberé* here in Paris, where at once after my arrival it became one of my chief employments to make war on the prevailing book of Madame de Staël.

I did this in a series of articles which I soon published as a complete book under the title *De l'Allemagne.* I did not intend, by choosing this title, to enter into literary competition with the work of this distinguished lady. I am one of the chief admirers of her intellectual ability; she has genius, but unfortunately this genius has a sex, and—more's the pity!—it is a feminine one. It was my duty as a man to oppose that brilliant *cancan* or gossiping, which was the more dangerous because she in her revelations as to Germany brought forward a mass of matters which were unknown in France, and which fascinated many by the charm of novelty. I did not dwell on casual errors and falsifications; I confined myself to showing the French what was the real meaning of that Romantic school which was so exalted

Digitized by Google

and praised by Madame de Staël. I showed that it consisted only of a handful of worms, which the Holy Fisherman at Rome knew very well how to use to bait souls withal. Since which time many Frenchmen have had their eyes opened in this respect, and even many good Christian souls have seen how much I was in the right to show in a German mirror the intriguing which is slinking and slipping about in France, and which now raises its shorn head more boldly than ever.

I also wished to give sound and true information as to German philosophy, and I believe that I have done it. I have candidly and frankly told the secret story out of school which was only known to the scholars in the highest class, and here in France people strutted and plumed themselves not a little even this revolution. I remember how Pierre Leroux[1] met me and frankly confessed that he had always believed that German philosophy was a kind of mystical fog, and the German philosophers a species of pious seers who only breathed in the fear of God. I have not, of course, been able to give the French any detailed description of our different systems; I loved them too well to bore them to such an extent, but I have betrayed to them the very last and deepest

[1] A very learned antiquarian and bibliographer, well known as author of several works on the Middle Age, &c.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

thoughts which lie at the bottom of all these systems, and which are the very opposite of everything which we have ever regarded as religion. Philosophy has carried on against Christianity in Germany the same war which it once waged in the Greek world against the older mythology, and here again it won the victory. In theory the religion of to-day is also knocked on the head; it is killed as to the idea, and it leads only a mechanical life like a fly which has had its head cut off, yet does not seem to mind it, and goes flying about as contented as ever. How many centuries the great fly Catholicism may still have in its belly—to borrow a phrase from Cousin—I know not, but the question is not of it. It refers far more to our poor Protestantism, which, to drag out its existence, has made all concessions conceivable, and withal must die. It availed naught that it purified its God of all anthropomorphism, that by much phlebotomy it pumped all the sensual or sensible blood from his veins, and also filtered him down to a pure spirit consisting of nothing but love, justice, wisdom, and virtue; 'twas all in vain, and a German Porphyrius named Feuerbach (an English Fire-brook, in French *Fleuve-de-flamme*) mocks not a little this attribute of God, pure spirit, whose love deserves little laudation since he lacks human gall, and who cannot cost justice much, having no stomach,

Digitized by Google

which must be fed *per fas et nefas;* whose wisdom should not be rated too highly, since he never has a cold in the head to interfere with meditation, and cannot be un-virtuous, having no body. Yes, not only the Protestant Rationalists, but even the Deists are struck down in Germany since Philosophy brings all its catapults to bear on the idea of God, as I have shown in my book *De l'Allemagne.*

I have been blamed on many sides for tearing away the canopy from the German heaven, and showing to all that every deity of the old faith has vanished, and that now there only sits there one old virgin with leaden hands and sorrowing heart —Necessity. Ah! I only said long ago what every one must suffer, and that which then sounded so strangely is now re-echoed from every roof yon side the Rhine. And in what fanatic tones are the anti-religious sermons often preached? We now have monks of atheism who would burn Voltaire alive for being an irreclaimable, hardened deist. I must confess this music does not please me, but neither does it alarm, for I stood behind the great *Maëstro* while he composed it, certainly in very illegible and entangled characters, so that every one might not decipher it. I observed how he often looked round anxiously, as if in fear he might be understood. He loved me well, for he was very sure I would not betray him; indeed, I sometimes thought him servile. Once when I was

Digitized by Google

out of patience over the saying, "All which is, is reasonable," he smiled strangely and remarked, "It might also be said that all which is reasonable must be." He looked about hurriedly, but was at once at ease, for only Henry Beer had heard the words. It was not till later that I understood such expressions. And so I also understood why he had declared in the "Philosophy of History" that Christianity was a progress because it had taught a God who died, while the heathen gods knew nothing of death. What a step forward it is, therefore, if God has never existed at all!

With the overthrow of the old doctrines of faith, that of ancient morality is involved. The Germans will long hold to the latter. It is with them as with certain ladies who were virtuous to their fortieth year, and then did not really think it worth their while to practise or begin delightful vices even though their morals had grown slack. The destruction of faith in heaven has not only a moral but a political power; the masses will bear no longer with Christian patience their earthly sufferings, and yearn for the blessings and joys of this life. Communism is a natural consequence of this changed view of the world, and it is spreading all over Germany. And it is also quite natural that the proletaries (radical agrarians), in their war against existing institutions, should have the most advanced intellects, the philosophers of the

Digitized by Google

great school as leaders. These go from doctrine to deed, to the last aim of all thought, and formulise the programme. How does it read? I dreamed it long ago and spoke it in these words, "We will be no sans-culottists, no frugal citizens, no cheap economical presidents; we found a democracy of equally lordly, equally holy, equally happy gods. You demand simple costumes, austere manners, and cheap unseasoned pleasures; we, on the contrary, demand nectar and ambrosia, purple garments, costly perfumes, luxury and splendour, dances of laughing nymphs, music and comedies. Be not angered, O virtuous republicans! To your censuring reproaches we reply what the fool in Shakespeare has already said, 'Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?'"

These words are in my book *De l'Allemagne*, in which I distinctly predicted that the political revolution of the Germans would proceed from that philosophy whose systems had been so often denied and depreciated as mere Scholasticism. It was easy prophesying. I also foresaw how the armoured and armed men would arise, who would fill the world with the crash of weapons—yes, and alas! fight fiercely among themselves.

Since that often-mentioned book has appeared, I have given the public no more on Germany. If I to-day break my long silence, it is less to

Digitized by Google

satisfy the longings of my own heart than the pressing entreaties of my friends. They have been many a time more than I indignant at the brilliant ignorance which prevails here as regards all German intellectual history, an ignorance which our enemies have exploited to great advantage. I say our enemies, not meaning thereby those pitiful beings who go peddling about from one editorial office to another, offering for sale coarse slanders, and take with them certain so-called patriots as *allumeurs*. Such men can in the long run do no harm; they are too stupid, and they will at last bring it so far as to cause the French to doubt whether we Germans really invented gunpowder. No; our really dangerous enemies are those familiars of the European aristocracy who glide after us in all disguises, even in women's garments, to murder our good reputation in the dark. The Men of Freedom, who fortunately escaped, in their native land, the dungeon or secret execution, or any of those little writs and warrants which make travelling so uncomfortable, would find no rest here in France, and those who cannot be injured in the body shall at least have their names daily cursed and crucified.

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

SECOND PART.

THE ROMANTIC SCHOOL.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFACE

BY THE GERMAN PUBLISHER.

A GREAT part of the present volume first appeared in French in 1833 in the *Europe Littéraire*, and was published in the same year in German with the title *Zur Geschichte der neueren schönen Literatur in Deutschland. Zwei Theile. Paris und Leipzig: Heideloff & Campe.* ["Contributions to the History of the Later Elegant Literature in Germany. Two Parts. Paris and Leipzig: Heideloff & Campe."] The first French edition of the book *De l'Allemagne*, Paris, Eugène Renduel, 1835, does not contain the later enlargements of the third book. These were, much amended, first added to the second German edition, which appeared in 1836, with the title of "The Romantic School." The new edition was needed in consequence of a decision of the Bund or Diet of July 5, 1832, by which almost unconquerable hindrances were put in the way to prevent works published abroad from circulating

Digitized by Google

in the *Bundesstaaten*, or States of the Diet. Everything politically suspicious was struck out by the red pencil of the censor, and now, for the first time, are the many gaps or missing passages thus expunged restored, after most careful comparison with the still existing original manuscripts. [The German publisher adds to these remarks a list of these corrected readings, which it is needless to supply, as they are given in the text. He remarks that in the latest French edition the diatribe against Victor Cousin, and the severe allusion to him in the first volume of "Germany," are omitted. He also adds that a tolerably complete or perfect English translation of the first German edition of this work appeared in 1836 in Boston (James Munroe & Co.), under the title, "Letters Auxiliary to the History of Modern Polite Literature in Germany, by Heinrich Heine, translated from the German by G. W. Haven." The first translation of the *Reisebilder* into English, followed by the "Book of Songs," by Charles Godfrey Leland, appeared in America, in Philadelphia, in 1856. There was also published in Philadelphia an admirable translation of the "Florentine Nights" by Simon Stern.—*Translator.*]

Digitized by Google

AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

ALTHOUGH these pages, which I wrote for the *Europe Littéraire*, a journal published here in Paris, form an introduction to other articles, I hasten to give them to the public of my native land, lest some other person should do me the honour of translation from French into German.

Certain passages are wanting in the *Europe Littéraire*, which I now print in full: the management of the publication required certain trifling omissions. In typographical errors the German compositor is not one whit behind his French brother. The book here thoroughly examined, which is by Madame de Staël, is called *De l'Allemagne*. And here I cannot refrain from correcting a remark with which the editor of *Europe Littéraire* accompanied these contributions. For he wrote that "to Catholic France German literature must be presented from a Protestant point

Digitized by Google

of view." I objected in vain that there was no Catholic France; that I did not write for a Catholic France; it was all-sufficient should I mention that I myself belonged in Germany to the Protestant Church. This mention, while it only expressed the fact that I have the pleasure to be paraded in a Lutheran Church book as an evangelical Christian, still left me free to express in books of learning or science any opinion, even if it contradicted the Protestant dogma—against which the editor's assertion that I wrote my essays from a Protestant point of view must lay dogmatic fetters on me. All in vain. The editor of *Europe* could not grasp subtle Tudesque distinctions, and they went for nothing. I mention this, partly lest I should be accused of inconsistency, partly too lest I incur the ridiculous suspicion of attaching any value to clerical-religious distinctions.

Since the French do not understand the language of our schools, I have in some expressions as to the existence of God used the same words as those with which they have been familiarised by the apostolic zeal of the Saint-Simonians, and as these phrases set forth my meaning quite nakedly and distinctly, I have preserved them in the German version. Aristocrats and priests, who have of late dreaded more than ever the power of my word, and have on that account sought to

Digitized by Google

depopularise[1] me, may distort and falsify those expressions, so as to make me appear guilty of Materialism, or even of atheism; they may make me out a Jew or a Saint-Simonian, they may accuse me of all conceivable heresies to their mob, but no cowardly retrospection shall ever lead *me* astray to disguise my views of divine things with common ambiguous phrases. And my friends too may blame because I do not more ingeniously disguise my thoughts, that I reveal without mercy the most delicate subjects; that I thereby irritate —— But neither the ill-will of my foes nor the small cunning folly of my friends shall ever restrain me from expressing myself straightforwardly as to that weightiest question of mankind, the Being of God.

I do not belong to the Materialists who embody the spirit; I give, far more, the spirit back unto bodies. I spiritualise it again—I sanctify it.

I do not belong to the atheists who deny—I affirm.

The Indifferentists and so called clever folk, who will not express themselves plainly as to God, are the real deniers of him. Such tacit denial is now actually becoming a social offence, since through

---

[1] *Depopularisiren*, quite as *baroque* a word in German as in English.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

it false conceptions are made to do duty which hitherto have always served despotism as a support.

The beginning and end of all things is in God.

HEINRICH HEINE.

Written in Paris, the 2nd of April 1833.

II.

The Preface of the first part of this book may also justify the appearance of the second. That promised the history of the Romantic School in general; this specially offers accounts of its leaders. In third and fourth divisions I shall, in addition, discuss the other heroes of the Schlegel cycle of legends, then the magic poets of Goethe's time, and finally the authors of my own day.

But I earnestly beg the kind reader not to forget that these pages were written for the *Europe Littéraire*, and that the limits which that journal prescribed, for political reasons, must be also borne in mind.

As I personally attended to the correction of this book, I beg pardon for too many typo-

Digitized by Google

graphical errors. Even a casual glance at my advertisements indicates that there are many such oversights. Here I must, seriously indeed, point out that the Emperor Henry was not a descendant of Barbarossa, and that Mr. August Wilhelm Schlegel is a year younger than I have made him; and the year of Arnim's birth is incorrectly given. And if I have also asserted in these pages that the higher criticism in Germany never occupied itself with Hoffmann, so I, exceptionally, forgot to mention that Willibald Alexis, the poet of Cabanis, also wrote a "characteristic" of Hoffmann.

HEINRICH HEINE.

Paris, the 30th of June 1833.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE most important portion of these pages, which were originally composed in French and addressed to the French people, have been placed before the public of my native land in a German version entitled *Zur Geschichte der neueren schönen Literatur in Deutschland*—"Contributions to a History of the Later Polite Literature in Germany." In the present enlarged form the book may deserve the new title *Die Romantische Schule*—"The Romantic School"—for I believe that it illustrates, in the most accurate manner, the chief points of the literary movement which that school developed.

It was my intention to also discuss the later periods of our literature in a similar form, but more pressing occupation and personal affairs prevented me from continuing the work. Moreover, the manner of treatment and the form of publication in my last mental efforts has been more and

Digitized by Google

more limited by circumstances. Therefore I have been obliged to publish my communications on the "History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany" as a second part of the *Salon*, and yet this work should really be the general introduction to German literature. I have already published in the daily press the details of a peculiar mischance which befell me in the second part of this *Salon*. My publisher, whom I accused of having, on his own authority, mutilated my book, has denied this accusation in the same journal, declaring the mutilation in question of the glorious work to be that of a jurisdiction above all censure.

I commend to the pity of the eternal gods the safety of my native land and the defenceless thoughts of its authors.

HEINRICH HEINE.

Written in Paris in the Autumn of 1835.

Digitized by Google

BOOK THE FIRST.

MADAME DE STAËL'S work *De l'Allemagne* is the only comprehensive source of information which the French possess as to the intellectual life of Germany. And yet since this book appeared a long time has elapsed, and an entirely new literature has meanwhile developed itself in that country. Is this only a transitional literature? has it attained its height? is it already faded? As to which opinions differ. The majority opine that with the death of Goethe a new literary period began in Germany, that in him old Deutschland went down to its grave, the aristocratic age of literature came to its end, and the democratic began; or, as a French journalist recently expressed it, "Que la democratie littéraire commence ou l'esprit des individus à cessé pour faire place à l'esprit de tous"—"The spirit of all has begun where that of single individuals ceased."

As for me, I cannot take it on myself to decide in so determined a manner as to the future evolutions of the German mind. I had, however, predicted for many years the end of the Goethean

Digitized by Google

Art-era (*Kunstperiode*), which name I first gave it. The prophesying was not difficult. Well did I know the ways and means of those malcontents who would fain put an end to the great Art-empire of Goethe; and it is said that I myself was seen figuring in the *emeutes* of those days against him. Now that he is dead, the recollection gives me bitter pain.

While I announce these pages as a continuation of Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne*, I must, while praising the knowledge which can be gathered from that book, still advise great caution in consulting it, and stamp it as the work of a coterie. Madame de Staël, of glorious memory, has here, in the form of a book, opened a *Salon* in which she received German writers and gave them opportunity to become known to the civilised world of France; but in all the babble of many and most varied voices which resound from this book, one always hears most distinctly the fine treble of August Wilhelm von Schlegel. Where she is all herself, wherever this woman, so gifted with feeling, expresses herself freely, with all her flaming heart and all the fireworks of her sky-rockets of wit, and sparkling extravagancies, there the book is good and admirable.[1]

[1] In the French version, "Lorsqu'elle se livre à sa chaleur naturelle, quand elle abandonne à ses radieuses explosions tout

Digitized by Google

But as soon as she obeys the influences of others, whenever she pays homage to some school the spirit of which is to her strange and incomprehensible, or as soon as the laudation of this school calls for Ultramontane tendencies directly contradictory to her Protestant clear-headedness, then the book becomes pitiable and unpleasant. Add to this that besides her unconscious party-spirit, she exercises a very conscious one, because by praising the spiritual life and idealism in Germany she means blame of the realism of France and the material splendour of the Empire. Her book *De l'Allemagne* is in this respect like the *Germania* of Tacitus, who, perhaps, by his eulogy of the Germans meant indirect satire of his Roman fellow-countrymen.

When I before spoke of a school to which Madame de Staël was devoted, and whose tendency she aided, I meant that which is called the Romantic. It will be made clear in this work that this was very different in Germany from what is known by the same name in France, and that its tendency was quite other than that of the French Romanticists.

But what was the Romantic School in Germany? It was nothing else but the reawakening of the

cette pyrotechnie sentimentale qu'elle dirige si bien, son livre est curieux et digne d'admiration."

Digitized by Google

poetry of the Middle Age, as it had shown itself in its songs, images, and architecture, in art and in life. But this poetry had risen from Christianity; it was a passion-flower which had sprung from the blood of Christ. I do not know whether the melancholy passion-flower of Germany is known by that name in France, and whether popular legend attributes to it the same mystical origin. It is a strange unpleasantly coloured blossom, in whose calyx we see set forth the implements which were used in the crucifixion of Christ, such as the hammer, pincers, and nails—a flower which is not so much ugly as ghostly, whose sight even awakes in our soul a shuddering pleasure, like the convulsively agreeable sensations [1] which come from pain itself. From this view the flower was indeed the fittest symbol for Christianity itself, whose most thrilling chain was in the luxury of pain.[2]

[1] *Kramphaft süssen Empfindungen.* In the French version *sensations douces.*—*Translator.*

[2] In the French version the sentences which follow are very much softened down, to suit a separate circle of less advanced readers, as follows:—

"Il m'importe de faire remarquer qu'en disant Christianisme je ne parle ni d'une de ses églises ni d'un sacerdoce quelconque, mais bien de la religion en elle-même, de cette religion dont les premiers dogmes renferment une condamnation de tout ce qui est chair, de sorte que non seulement elle accorde à l'esprit une suprême puissance sur la chair, mais qu'elle voudrait encore détruire celle-ci pour glorifier l'autre sublime et divine dans son principe, mais, hélas! trop désinteressée pour ce monde impar-

Digitized by Google

Though in France only Roman Catholicism is understood by the word Christianity, I must specially preface that I only speak of the latter. I speak of that religion in whose first dogmas there is a damnation of all flesh, and which not only allows the spirit power over the flesh, but will also kill this to glorify the spirit. I speak of that religion by whose unnatural requisitions sin and hypocrisy really came into the world, in this that by the condemnation of the flesh the most innocent sensual pleasures became sins, and because the impossibility of becoming altogether spiritual naturally created hypocrisy. I speak of that religion which by teaching the doctrine of the casting away of all earthly goods, and of dog-like-abject humility and angelic patience, became the most approved support of despotism. Men have found out the real life and meaning (*Wesen*) of this religion, and do not now content themselves with promises of supping in Paradise; they know that matter has also its merits, and is not all the

fait, une pareille religion devint le plus ferme soutien des despotes qui ont su exploiter à leur profit ce rejet absolu des biens terrestres, cette naïve humilité, cette béate patience, cette céleste résignation prêchée par les saints apôtres. Des prédicateurs moins bonaces ont surgi depuis, et dans leurs paraboles terribles; ils démontrent les difficultés pratiques et les dangers sociaux des doctrines nazaréennes: ils ne se laissent plus degoûter du banquet de la vie par ces appels au ciel qu'on leur fait."

Digitized by Google

devil's, and they now defend the delights of this world, this beautiful garden of God, our inalienable inheritance. And therefore, because we have grasped so entirely all the consequences of that absolute spiritualism, we may believe that the Christian Catholic view of the world has reached its end. Every age is a sphinx, which casts itself into the abyss when man has guessed its riddle.

Yet we do in no wise deny the good results which this Christian Catholic view of the world established in Europe. It was necessary as a wholesome reaction against the cruelly colossal materialism which had developed itself in the Roman realm, and threatened to destroy all spiritual human power.[1] As the lascivious memoirs of the last century form the *pièces justificatives* of the French Revolution, as the terrorism of a *comité du salut public* seems to be necessary

[1] It is hardly worth while to indicate the inconsistencies of Heine, but it may be observed that these remarks are in direct contradiction to the Hellenism which he generally professes; the leading doctrine of which is, that the perfect culture of the body alone implies æsthetic perfection, which in turn involves true moral culture. Roman corruption was caused not by the preponderance of materialism, but by excessive importation of Oriental vice, which was surcharged with every form and phase of spiritualism and supernaturalism, as Heine himself has elsewhere shown. It was by abandoning its early "materialism" for spiritualism that Rome fell, so far as any moral cause can be assigned for its decay.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

physic when we read the confessions of the aristocratic world of France,[1] so we recognise the wholesomeness of ascetic spiritualism when we read Petronius or Apuleius, which are to be regarded as the *pièces justificatives* of Christianity. The flesh had become so arrogant in this Roman world that it required Christian discipline to chasten it. After the banquet of a Trimalchion such a hunger-cure as Christianity was a necessity.

Or was it that as lascivious old men seek by being whipped to excite new power of enjoyment, so old Rome endured monkish chastisement to find more exquisite delight in torture and voluptous rapture in pain?

Evil excess of stimulant! it took from the body of the state of Rome its last strength. It was not by division into two realms that Rome

[1] An error which has been chiefly originated and disseminated by Protestants. French society was "immoral" to vileness, that is to say, a portion of it—not nearly all; but this was only a drop in the ocean compared to other causes of the Revolution, the chief of which was a mass of civil and ecclesiastical mediæval laws, abuses, and privileges, which ground the masses into poverty, while, on the other hand, reformers were busy in teaching everywhere the rights of man. Heine was the last man living who should have taken this view, which perhaps accounts for his taking it. In these passages, he, without any questioning or examining into historical facts, yields to his opponents all the principle for which he generally contends.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

perished. On the Bosphorus, as by the Tiber, Rome was devoured by the same Jewish spiritualism, and here, as there, Roman history was that of a long dying agony, which lasted for centuries. Did murdered Judea, in leaving to Rome its spiritualism, wish to revenge itself on the victorious foe, as did the dying centaur who craftily left to the son of Hercules the deadly garment steeped in his own blood? Truly Rome, the Hercules among races, was so thoroughly devoured by Jewish poison that helm and harness fell from its withered limbs, and its imperial war-voice died away into the wailing cadences of monkish prayer and the soft thrilling of castrated boys.

But what weakens old age strengthens youth. That spiritualism had a healthy action on the too sound and strong races of the North;[2] the too full-blooded barbarous bodies were Christianly spiritualised, and European civilisation began. The Catholic Church has in this respect the strongest claims on our regard and admiration.

---

[1] French version, "le lion de Juda démeurtré en gratifiant les Romains de son spiritualisme."

[2] "Die übergesunden Völker des Nordens." French version, "les peuples *transmigrants* du Nords. Ces corps de barbares, trop vigoreux et trop chargés de sang," &c. The decay of the Scandinavian races as conquerors dates, however, from their conversion to Christianity.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

It succeeded by subduing with its great genial institutions the bestiality of Northern barbarians and mastering brutal matter.

The Art-work of the Middle Age manifests this mastery of mere material by mind, and it is very often its only mission. The epic poems of this period may be easily classed according to the degree of this subjection or influence.

There can be no discussion here of lyrical and dramatic poems, for the latter did not exist, and the former are as like in every age as are the songs of nightingales in spring.

Although the epic poetry of the Middle Age was divided into sacred and profane, both kinds were altogether Christian according to their kind; for if sacred poesy sang of the Jewish race and its history, which was regarded as the one which alone was holy, or the heroes and legends of the Old and New Testaments, its legends, and, in brief, the Church, still all the life of the time was reflected in profane poetry with its Christian views and action. The flower of the religious poetic art in the German Middle Age is perhaps "Barlaam and Josaphat," in which the doctrine of abnegation, of abstinence, and the denial and contempt of all worldly glory, is set forth most consistently. Next to this I would class the *Lobgesang auf den heiligen Anno*—"The Eulogium of St. Hanno"—as the best of the religious kind.

Digitized by Google

But this latter is of a far more secular character. It differs from the first as the portrait of a Byzantine saint differs from an old German one. As in those Byzantine pictures, so we see in "Barlaam and Josaphat" the utmost simplicity; there is no perspective side-work,[1] and the long lean statue-like forms and the idealistic serious faces come out strongly drawn, as if from a mellow gold ground.[2] But in the song of praise of St. Hanno, the side-work or accessories are almost the subject,[3] and, notwithstanding the grandeur of the plan, the details are treated in the minutest manner, and we know not whether to admire in it the conception of a giant or the patience of a dwarf. But the evangel-poem of Ottfried, which is generally praised as the masterpiece of sacred poetry, is not by far so admirable as the two which I have mentioned.

In profane poetry we find, as I have already signified, first the cycle of sagas of the Nibelungen and the Heldenbuch or Book of Heroes. In them prevails all the pre-Christian manner of thought and of feeling: in them rude strength has not as yet been softened by chivalry. There the stern

[1] French version, "point d'accessoires enjolivés."

[2] French version, "les figures d'un serieux idéal, ressortent vigoureusement comme s'il étaient points sur ces fonds d'or mat qui decoraient les églises de l'empire d'orient."

[3] French version, "comme dans les tableaux gothiques."

Digitized by Google

Kempe-warriors of the North stand like stone images, and the gentle gleam and the more refined breath of Christianity has not as yet penetrated their iron armour. But little by little a light dawns in the old Teutonic forest; the ancient idolatrous oak-trees are felled, and we see a brighter field of battle where Christ wars with the heathen. This appears in the saga-cycle of Charlemagne, in which that which we really see is the Crusades reflecting themselves with their religious influences. And now from the spiritualising power of Christianity, chivalry, the most characteristic feature of the Middle Age, unfolds itself, and is at last sublimed into a spiritual knighthood. This secular knighthood appears most attractively glorified in the saga-cycle of King Arthur, in which the sweetest gallantry, the most refined courtesy, and the most adventurous passion for combat prevail. Among the charmingly eccentric arabesques and fantastic flower-pictures of this poem we are greeted by the admirable Iwain, the all-surpassing Lancelot du Lac, and the bold, gallant, and true, but somewhat tiresome, Wigalois. Nearly allied and interwoven with this cyclus of sagas is that of the Holy Grail, in which the spiritual knighthood is glorified; and here we meet three of the grandest poems of the Middle Age, the Titurel, the Parcival, and the Lohengrin. Here we indeed find ourselves face

Digitized by Google

to face with Romantic Poetry. We look deeply into her great sorrowing eyes; she twines around us, unsuspecting it, her fine scholastic nets, and draws us down into the bewildering, deluding depths of mediæval mysticism.

At last, however, we come to poems of that age which are not unconditionally devoted to Christian spiritualism; nay, it is often indirectly reflected on, where the poet disentangles himself from the bonds of abstract Christian virtues, and plunges delighted into the world of pleasure and of glorified sensuality; and it is not the worst poet by any means who has left us the principal work thus inspired. This is "Tristan and Isolde;" and I must declare that Godfrey of Strasburg, the composer of this most beautiful poem of the Middle Age, is perhaps also its greatest poet, towering far above all the splendour of Wolfram von Eschilboch, whom we so admire in "Parcival," and the fragments of "Titurel." It may now be permitted to praise Master Godfrey unconditionally, though in his own time his book was certainly regarded as godless; and similar works, among them the "Lancelot," considered as dangerous. And some very serious things did indeed result. The fair Francesca da Polenta[1] and her handsome friend had to pay

[1] In the French version the usual and more beautiful name of Francesca da Rimini is retained. Francesca da Polenta, or "Fanny Mush," is as unpoetical in English as Beatrice Cenci when translated to "Betty Rags."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

dearly for the pleasure of reading on a summer day in such a book; but the trouble came not from the reading, but from their suddenly ceasing to read.

There is in all these poems of the Middle Age a marked character which distinguishes them from those of Greece and Rome. We characterise this difference by calling the first Romantic and the other Classic. Yet these appellations are only uncertain fabrics, and have led hitherto to the most discouraging, wearisome entanglements, which become worse since we call antique poetry, instead of classic, Plastic. Here was the cause of much misunderstanding; for justly, all poets should work their material plastically, be it Christian or heathen; they should set it forth in clear outlines; in short, plastic form should be the main thing in modern Romantic art, quite as much as in the ancient. And are not the figures in the *Divina Commedia* of Dante or in the pictures of Raphael as plastic as those in Virgil? The difference lies in this, that the plastic forms in ancient art are absolutely identical with the subject or the idea which the artist would set forth, as, for example, that the wanderings of Ulysses mean nothing else but the journeyings of a man named Odysseus, who was son of Laertes and husband of Penelope; and further, that the Bacchus which we see in the Louvre is nothing else than the graceful, winsome

Digitized by Google

son of Semele, with audacious melancholy in his eyes and sacred voluptuousness on his soft and arching lips. It is all otherwise in Romantic art, in which the wild wanderings of a knight have ever an esoteric meaning, symbolising perhaps the erring course of life. The dragon whom he overcomes is sin; the almond which from afar casts comforting perfume to the traveller is the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, which are three in one, as shell, fibre, and kernel make one nut. When Homer describes the armour of a hero, it is a good piece of work, worth so or so many oxen; but when a monk of the Middle Age describes in his poems the garments of the Mother of God, one may be sure that by this garb he means as many virtues, and a peculiar meaning lies hidden under this holy covering of the immaculate virginity of Maria, who, as her son is the almond-kernel, is naturally sung as the almond-flower. That is the character of the mediæval poetry which we call Romantic.[1]

[1] This distinction and description are admirable beyond praise, and it is not to negative it, but to add as a very curious fact that I mention that among the Greeks the almond was the subject of a mass of mystical symbolism and allegorical legends even deeper and stranger than those of the Middle Age, which latter were indeed derived from them. Such was the story of the dream of Jupiter, the begetting of Agdistis, the growth of the almond, and the blessing of Atys, as given by Pausanius, (vii. 7), also the equally occult story of Phyllis and Demophoön

Digitized by Google

Classic art had only to represent the finite or determined, and its forms could be one and the same with the idea of the artist. Romantic art had to set forth, or rather signify, the infinite and purely spiritual, and it took refuge in[1] a system of traditional, or rather of parabolistic symbols, as Christ himself had sought to render clear his spiritualistic ideas by all kinds of beautiful parables. Hence the mystical, problematic, marvellous, and transcendental in the art-work of the Middle Age, in which fantasy makes her most desperate efforts to depict the purely spiritual by means of sensible images, and invents colossal follies, piling Pelion on Ossa and Parcival on Titurel to attain to heaven.

Among other races where poetry attempted to display the infinite, and where monstrous fancies

---

(Friedrich, *Symbolik der Natur*, Wurzburg, 1859, p. 216). From one of the most ancient German hymns, also from Conrad von Wurzburg (*Die goldene Schmiede*), it appears most manifest that the Christian symbolism of the almond came from the classic original, from the allusion to the *rod*. It is as follows: "Aaron laid a rod in the earth, which bore the almond-nut, noble beyond all measure: that didst thou bear, mother, without man's aid, Sancta Maria!" The almond-rod was the Greek symbol of generation (Friedrich). The truth is, that there was a much greater amount of occult, curious, and poetical symbolism (resembling that of the Middle Age) among the Romans than is generally imagined even among scholars.—*Translator.*

[1] French version, "et il était obligé de puïsser ses moyens dans un système de symboles traditionels." This is preferable to the original.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

appeared, as, for instance, among the Scandinavians and Indians,[1] we find poems which, being romantic, are also called such.

We cannot say much as to the music of the Middle Age, for original documents as to it are wanting. It was not till late in the sixteenth century that the masterpieces of Catholic church-music, which cannot be too highly praised, appeared. These express in the most exquisite manner pure Christian spiritualism. The recitative arts, which are spiritual from their very nature, could indeed flourish fairly in Christianity, yet it was less favourable to those of design, for as these had to represent the victory of mind over matter, and yet must use matter as the means wherewith to work, they had to solve a problem against Nature. Hence we find in sculpture and painting those revolting subjects martyrdoms, crucifixions, dying saints, and the flesh crushed in every form. Such themes were martyrdom for sculpture; and when I contemplate those distorted images in which Christian asceticism and renunciation of the senses is expressed by distorted, pious heads, long thin arms, starveling legs, and awkwardly fitting garments, I feel an indescrib-

[1] This is quite as applicable to the Red Indians of America as to those of Asia, since the former also possess stupendous mythologies, in which may also be found elementary spirits and elves like those of Paracelsus, heroic sagas, and highly imaginative legends and songs.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

able compassion for the artists of that time. The painters were indeed more favoured, for the material for their work or colour did not in its uncontrollablity,[1] in its varied play of colour, resist spiritualism so obstinately as the material of the sculptors, and yet they were obliged to load the sighing canvas with the most repulsive forms of suffering. In truth, when we regard many galleries which contain nothing but scenes of bloodshed, scourging, and beheading, one might suppose that the old masters had painted for the collection of an executioner.

But human genius can transform and glorify even the unnatural; many painters solved this problem of making what was revolting beautiful and elevating, and the Italians especially succeeded in sacrificing to beauty at the expense of spiritualism, and in rising to that ideality which attained perfection in so many pictures of the Madonna. As regards this subject the Catholic clergy always made some concession to sensuality. This image of immaculate beauty which is glorified by maternal love and suffering had the privilege of being made famous by poets and painters, and adorned with

[1] *Unerfassbarkeit*, ungraspability. In French, "jets de couleur insaisisibles," the next clause being omitted. Here, as in all instances where there are any difficulties, the French translator skips or slurs them over in the most airy manner.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

all charms of the sense. For it was a magnet which could attract the great multitude to the lap of Christianity.[1] Madonna Maria was the beautiful *dame du comptoir* of the Catholic Church, who attracted with her beautiful eyes, and held fast its customers, especially the barbarians of the North.[2]

Architecture had in the Middle Age the same character as the other arts, as indeed all the manifestations of life then harmonised so marvellously with one another. The tendency to parable shows itself here as in poetry. When we now enter a Gothic cathedral, we hardly suspect the esoteric sense of its stone symbolism; only a general impression pierces our soul; we realise an elevation of feeling and mortification of the flesh. The interior is a hollow cross, and we wander among the instruments of martyrdom itself; the variegated windows cast on us red and green light, like blood and corruption; funeral songs wail around; under our feet are mortuary tablets and decay, and the soul soars with the colossal columns to a giddy height, tearing itself with pain from the body, which falls like a weary worn-out garment to the ground. But when we behold the exteriors of these Gothic cathedrals,

[1] The French version here wisely omits the word "magnet."

[2] French version, "la Vierge Marie était la dame châtelaine de l'église catholique, et qui attirait et retenait les chevaliers du Nord par son doux et céleste sourire."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

these enormous buildings which are worked so aërially, so finely, delicately, transparently, cut as it were into open work, that one might take them for Brabant lace in marble, then we feel truly the power of that age which could so master stone itself that it seems spectrally transfused with spiritual life, and thus even the hardest material declares Christian spiritualism.

But arts are only the mirror of life, and as Catholicism died away, so its sounds grew fainter and its lights dimmer in art. During the Reformation Catholic song gradually disappeared in Europe, and in its place we see the long-perished poetry of Greece coming to life. It was indeed only an artificial spring, a work of the gardener, not of the sun, and the trees and flowers were in close pots and a glass canopy protected them from cold and northern wind.[1]

In the world's history every event is not the direct result of another; all events rather exert a mutual influence. It was by no means due only to the Greek scholars who emigrated to Europe after the fall of Byzantium that a love for Grecian culture and the desire to imitate it became so general among us, a similar Protestantism prevailed then in art as well as in life. Leo X., that splendid Medicis, was as zealous a Pro-

[1] *Glasshimmel*, literally a glass heaven, applied to greenhouses.

Digitized by Google

testant as Luther, and as there was a Latin prose protest in Wittenberg, so they protested poetically in Rome in stone, colour, and *ottaverime*. And do not the mighty marble images of Michael Angelo, the laughing nymphs of Giulio Romano, and the joyous intoxication of life in the verses of Master Ludovico Ariosto form a protesting opposition to the old, gloomy, worn-out Catholicism? The painters of Italy waged a polemic against priestdom which was perhaps more practical than that of the Saxon theologian. The blooming rosy flesh in the pictures of Titian is all Protestantism. The limbs of his Venus are more thorough *theses* than those which the German monk pasted on the church door of Wittenberg. Then it was that men felt as if suddenly freed from force and pressure of a thousand years; most of all the artists again breathed freely as the nightmare of Christianity seemed to spin whirling from their breasts;[1] they threw themselves with enthusiasm into the sea of Greek joyousness, from whose foam rose to them goddesses of beauty. Painters once more painted the ambrosial joys of Olympus; sculptors carved with the joy of yore

[1] "Der Alp des Christenthums von der Brust gewälzt schien." The Alp, a nightmare (from *Elb*, a witch's child by an imp, or same root as *Elf*) is supposed, like the *Irrwisch*, to go spinning or waltzing away. According to Martinius, *Alp* is from the *Alba*, a dancing white spectre or white lady, the same as the *Vila* of the Slavonians.—*Translator*.

Digitized by Google

old heroes from the marble; poets again sang the house of Atreos and Laius; and so the age of new classic poetry began.

As modern life was most perfectly developed in France under Louis XIV., the new classic poetry also received there its most finished perfection, and in a measure an independent originality. Through the political influence of the great king this poetry spread over Europe; in Italy, its home, it assumed a French colour; the heroes of French tragedy went with the Anjous to Spain; it passed with Madame Henrietta to England, and we Germans of course built our clumsy temples to the powdered Olympus of Versailles. The most famous high-priest of this religion was Gottsched, that wonderful long wig whom our dear Goethe has so admirably described in his memoirs.

Lessing was the literary Arminius who delivered our theatre from this foreign rule. He showed us the nothingness, the laughableness, the flat and faded folly of those imitations of the French theatre, which were in turn imitated from the Greek. But he became the founder of modern German literature, not only by his criticism, but by his own works of art. This man pursued with enthusiasm and sincerity art, theology, antiquity, and archæology, the art of poetry, history; all with the same zeal and to the same purpose. There lives and breathes in all his works the

Digitized by Google

same great social idea, the same progressive humanity, the same religion of reason, whose John he was, and whose Messiah we await. This religion he always preached, but alas! too often alone and in the desert. And there was one art only of which he knew nothing—that of changing stones into bread, for he consumed the greatest part of his life in poverty and under hard pressure,—a curse which clings to nearly all great German geniuses, and will last, it may be, till ended by political freedom. Lessing was more inspired by political feelings than men supposed, a peculiarity which we do not find among his contemporaries, and we can now see for the first time what he meant in sketching the duo-despotism in Emilia Galotti.[1] He was regarded then as a champion of freedom of thought and against clerical intolerance; for his theological writings were better understood. The fragments "On the Education of the Human Race," which Eugène Rodrigue has translated into French, may give an idea of the vast comprehensiveness of Lessing's mind. The two critical works which exercised the most influence on art are his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*—"Hamburg Dramatic Art"—and

[1] *Duodezdespotismus.* A joke fearfully and wonderfully made, to which the French translator succumbs by meekly calling it *despotisme.*—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

his "Laocoön, or the Limits of Painting and Poetry." His most remarkable theatrical pieces are "Emilia Galotti," "Minna von Barnhelm," and "Nathan the Wise."

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing was born at Camenz in Lausitz, the 22nd January 1729, and died in Brunswick the 15th of February 1781. He was a man out and out, who, when he destroyed something old in a battle, at the same time always created something new and better. "He was," says a German author, "like those pious Jews, who during the second building of the Temple were often troubled by attacks of the enemy, and so fought with one hand while with the other they worked at the house of God." This is not the place where I can say more of Lessing, but I cannot refrain from remarking that he is, of all who are recorded in the whole history of literature, the writer whom I love best.

I will here mention another author who worked in the same spirit, with the same object as Lessing, and who may be regarded as his successor. It is true that his eulogy is here also out of place, since he occupies an altogether peculiar position in literature, and his relation to his time and to his contemporaries. It is Johann Gottfried Herder, born in 1744 at Morungen, in East Prussia, and who died at Weimar in the year 1803.

Digitized by Google

Literary history is the great *Morgue* where every one seeks his dead, those whom he loves or to whom he is related. When I see there, among so many dead of little interest, a Lessing or a Herder, with their noble manly countenances, my heart throbs; I cannot pass them by without hastily kissing their dead lips.

Yet if Lessing did so much to destroy the imitating of French second-hand Greekdom, he still, by calling attention to the true works of art of Greek antiquity, gave an impulse to a new kind of ridiculous imitations. By his battling with religious superstition he advanced the sober search for clearer views which spread widely in Berlin, and had in the late blessed Nicolai its chief organ, and in the General German Library its arsenal.[1] The most deplorable mediocrity began to show itself more repulsively than ever, and flatness and insipidity blew themselves up like the frog in the fable.

It is a great mistake to suppose that Goethe, who had already come before the world, was generally known then in the true sense. His *Götz von Berlichingen* and his *Werther* were received with enthusiasm; but so too were the works of common

[1] This reference to Nicolai and the Library is omitted in the French version.

Digitized by Google

bunglers,[1] and Goethe had but a small niche in the temple of literature. As I have said, *Götz* and *Werther* had a spirited reception, but more on account of the subject-matter than of their artistic merits, which very few appreciated in these masterworks. *Götz* was a dramatised romance of chivalry, and such writings were then the rage. In *Werther* the world saw the reproduction of a true story, that of young Jerusalem, who shot himself dead for love, and thereby, in those dead-calm days, made a great noise. People read with tears his touching letters; some shrewdly observed that the manner in which Werther had been banished from aristocratic society had increased his weariness of life. The discussion of suicide caused the book to be still more discussed; it occurred to several fools on this occasion to shoot themselves, and the book, owing to its subject, went off like a shot.[2] The novels of August Lafontaine were just as much read, and as this author wrote incessantly, he was more famous than Wolfgang Goethe. Wieland was the great poet then, with whom perhaps might be classed the ode-maker, Ramler of Berlin. Wieland was honoured idolatrously, far

[1] *Stümper.* In America the same word *stumper* is sometimes used in the same sense.—*Translator.*

[2] "Das Buch machte durch seinen Stoff einen bedeutenden Knalleffekt." French version, "l'ouvrage fit alors un effet complet."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

more at that time than Goethe. Iffland ruled the theatre with his dreary bourgeois dramas, and Kotzebue with his flat and frivolously witty jests.[1]

It was in opposition to this literature that there sprung up in Germany, at the end of the last century, a school which we call the Romantic, and of which Messrs. August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel have presented themselves as managing agents. Jena, where these and many other souls in like accord found themselves "off and on," was the centre from which the new æsthetic doctrine spread. I say doctrine, for this school began with judgments of the art works of the past and giving recipes for art works of the future, and in both directions the Schlegel school rendered great service to æsthetic criticism. By judging of such works of art as already existed, either their faults and failures were indicated, or their merits and beauties brought to light. In controversy and in thus indicating artistic shortcomings, the Messrs. Schlegel were entirely imitators of old Lessing; they obtained possession of his great battle-blade,

[1] In the older German version the word *bürgerlich* (*bourgeois*) is wanting, and instead of *banal* there is *trivial* (G. P.). In the French version the passage is as follows: "Cependant il faut avouer que l'auteur de l'Oberon et d'Aristippe a bien mérité ses succés; il a doté l'Allemagne de chefs-d'œuvre aussi beaux qu'utiles, c'était un géant à côté de Iffland qui dominait le théâtre avec ses drames bourgeois, et Kotzebue avec ses innombrables comédies."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

but the arm of August William Schlegel was too tenderly weak, and the eyes of his brother Friedrich too mystically clouded for the former to strike so strongly and the latter so keenly and accurately as Lessing. True, in descriptive criticism, where the beauties of a work of art are to be set forth—where it came to a delicate feeling out of its characteristics, and bringing them home to our intelligence—then, compared to the Schlegels, old Lessing was nowhere.[1] But what shall I say as to their recipes for preparing works of art? There we find in the Messrs. Schlegel a weakness which we think may also be detected in Lessing; for he is as weak in affirming as he is strong in denying. He rarely succeeds in laying down a fundamental principle, still more seldom a correct one. He wants the firm basis of a philosophy or of a philosophical system. And this is still more sadly the case with the brothers Schlegel.

Much is fabled as to the influence of Fichtean Idealism and Schelling's philosophy of Nature on the Romantic school, which is even declared to have sprung from it. But I see here at the most only the influence of certain fragments of thoughts from Fichte and Schelling, but not

[1] "Da sind die Herrn Schlegel dem alten Lessing ganz überlegen." Quite as familiar a phrase as the one which I have employed. In American parlance it would be literally translated as "old Lessing is laid out flat."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

at all that of a philosophy; and this may be explained on the simple ground that Fichte's philosophy had lost its hold, and Fichte himself had made it lose its interest by a mingling of tenets and ideas from Schelling; and because, on the other hand, Schelling had never set forth a philosophy, but only a vague philosophising, an unsteady vacillating improvisation of poetical philosophemes. It may be that it was from the Fichtean Idealism—that deeply ironical system, where the I is opposed to the not-I and annihilates it—that the Romantic school took the doctrine of irony which the late Solger especially developed, and which the Schlegels at first regarded as the soul of art, but which they subsequently found to be fruitless, and exchanged for the more positive axioms of the Theory of Identity of Schelling. Schelling, who then taught in Jena, had indeed a great personal influence on the Romantic school: he is, what is not generally known in France, also a bit of a poet; and it is said that he was in doubt whether he should not deliver all his philosophical doctrines in a poetic or even metrical form. This doubt characterises the man.[1]

But if the Messrs. Schlegel could not lay

[1] All of the preceding paragraph, from the words "much is fabled," are omitted in the French version, and the greater part is only to be found in the first German edition.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

down any definite system for the great works which they prescribed to the poets of their school, they made up the defect by recommending the best productions of the past as patterns, and by making them accessible to their scholars. These were chiefly the works of the Christian-Catholic school of the Middle Age. The translation of Shakespeare, who stands on the border of this art, and smiles with Protestant clearness into our modern time, was intended for controversial purposes, which it would require too much space to explain here;[1] and this translation was undertaken by August Wilhelm von Schlegel at a time before people had quite enthused themselves back into the Middle Age. Later, when this came to pass, Calderon was translated and exalted far above Shakespeare, because it was found that in him the piety of the Middle Age was most clearly and purely impressed, and that in its two leading motives, chivalry and monachism. The pious comedies of the Castilian priestly poet, whose flowers of fable are sprinkled with holy water and ecclesiastically incensed, were imitated with all their holy *grandeza*, all their sacerdotal luxury, all their consecrated conceits and craziness, and we saw flourishing in Germany those chequered-

[1] *Vide* "Shakespeare's Maidens and Women" for this explanation.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

faithed, insanely profound poems in which hearts were mystically enamoured, as in the *Andacht zum Kreutz*—"Adoration of the Cross"—or beat in honour of the Virgin Mary, as in *Der standhafte Prinz*—"The Constant Prince"—and Zacharias Werner carried matters in this direction as far as they could well go without being shut up by the proper authority in a madhouse.

"Our poetry," said the brothers Schlegel, "is old; our Muse is an old wife with a distaff; our Cupid is not a blonde boy, but a shrunk and shrivelled dwarf with grey hair; our feelings are faded, our imagination is dry; we must re-freshen ourselves, we must seek again the filled-up fountains of naïve, simple poesy of the Middle Age, and then there will sparkle up again for us the waters of youth."[1] It was not necessary to speak thus twice to a dried-up, arid people, especially to those poor souls with thirsty throats who dwelt in the Prussian sands, who longed to become youthful and blooming, and they rushed to the wondrous springs, and swilled, swallowed, and swigged with immoderate desire. But it happened to them as it did to the old lady's-maid of whom this tale is told. She had observed that

[1] Here the French version has a better word than the original, "la ruisseller a pour nous l'eau de Jouvence," in reference to a Trouveur *lai* by that name.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

her mistress had a magic elixir which restored youth, and one day when her dame had departed, she took the vial of the elixir from her toilette table, but instead of sipping a few drops, she took such a tremendous pull, that owing to the greatly concentrated marvellous strength of the rejuvenating reviver, she became not merely young, but a very little child. And so indeed it happened to our admirable Tieck, one of the best poets of the school, that he became almost a babe, and bloomed into that babbling simplicity which Madame de Staël had so much trouble to admire. She herself admits that it seemed very singular to her when a character came forth in a drama making his debut with the words, "I am the bold Bonifacius, and I come to let you know," *et cætera.*

Ludwig Tieck had in his novel *Steinbald's Wanderungen*—"The Travels of Steinbald"—and in "The Outpourings of the Heart by an art-loving Monk," by a certain Wackenroder, which he published, commended to artists the naïve rude beginnings of art as models. The pious and childlike feeling which appears even in their unskilfulness was advised for imitation. Of Raphael they would not hear a word, and indeed cared little for Perugino, his teacher, who was, however, far more prized, and in whom they discovered remains of those excellences whose entire perfection they so piously admired

Digitized by Google

in the immortal master-works of Fra Giovanno Angelico da Fiesole. To form a conception of the taste of the art-enthusiasts of those times, one should go to the Louvre, where the best pictures which were so absolutely admired are to be seen. To get an idea of the mob of poets who imitated the bards of the Middle Age in all possible metres, he should visit the madhouse of Charenton.

And yet I think that those pictures in the first hall of the Louvre are far too graceful to give an idea of the taste of those days in art in Germany. One should think of these old Italian pictures as translated into old German; for they regarded the works of the old German painters as far more simple and childlike, therefore more worthy of imitation, than the old Italian. It was declared that the Germans with their *Gemüth* (a word for which there is no equivalent in French [1]) could feel Christianity more deeply than other nations; and Friedrich Schlegel and his friend Joseph Görres rooted and rummaged in all the old towns on the Rhine for the remains of old German pictures and carvings, which were adored with blind faith as holy relics.

I have compared the German Parnassus of those

[1] *Gemüth*, defined as soul, spirit, state of mind, disposition, mood. *Gemüthvoll*, full of cheerful or kindly feeling, genial. It may generally be rendered in English by "feeling," if we allow to our word all its true meanings.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

days with Charenton, but I believe it is too little said. A French lunacy is far behind a German one, for in this latter madness, as Polonius said, there is method; and that German lunacy was carried out with a pedantry surpassing all belief, with a terrible conscientious scrupulousness, with a thoroughness of which a superficial French madman cannot even form an idea.

The political condition of Germany was then peculiarly favourable to a Christian Old-German movement. "Poverty teaches prayer," says the proverb,[1] and truly poverty or dire need was never greater in Germany, and therefore the people were specially inclined to prayer, piety, and Christianity. There is no race more devoted to its princes than ours; and what grieved them more than the mournful condition to which their country had been reduced by war and foreign rule was the melancholy sight of their conquered rulers creeping to the feet of Napoleon. The whole nation were like those true-hearted old servants whom we pity in plays, the retainers in great families, who feel the humiliations which their masters suffer more than the masters themselves; who weep their bitterest tears in secret when the

[1] "Noth lehrt beten," also "Noth lehrt rufen," "Noth bricht eisen," "Noth ist Meister," &c. There are nearly thirty German proverbs on the word "Noth," all to the same effect.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

family plate must be sold, and even apply their own poor savings that noble wax-tapers, and not plain tallow-candles, may appear on the gentlefolk's table. The universal unrest and depression found relief in religion, and there sprung up a pietistic yielding to the will of God, from whom alone help was hoped for. And indeed none other save God could help against Napoleon. There could be no more reliance on earthly armies, and eyes must be raised in hope only to Heaven.

And so we could also have borne peacefully enough with Napoleon. But our princes, while they hoped that God would free them from him, also indulged the thought that the united forces of their people might also be of great assistance, and they sought with this intention to awaken a common feeling among the Germans; and even the most eminent personages now spoke of German nationality, of a common German Fatherland, of the union of the Christian-German races, and of the unity of Germany. We were ordered to become patriots, and patriots we became; for we do everything which our princes command.

But one should not here understand by patriotism quite the same feeling which the word implies in France. The patriotism of the Frenchman consists in this, that his heart is thereby warmed; by this warmth it expands, spreads, and no longer embraces his nearest emotions, but all France and

Digitized by Google

all the realm of civilisation. The patriotism of the German, however, is shown by his heart becoming narrower and shrinking up and drawing in like leather in a frost; by hating everything foreign, and being no longer European or cosmopolite, but only a closely-cramped *Deutscher*. So we saw the ideal churl and clownishness reduced to system by Jahn, the beginning of a shabby, clumsy, unwashed opposition to the sentiment which is the very highest and holiest which Germany ever brought forth, namely, that humanity, that universal fraternisation of mankind, that cosmopolitanism to which our great minds, Lessing, Herder, Schiller, Goethe, and Jean Paul, were ever devoted.

What happened soon after in Germany is too well known to you all. When God, the snow, and the Cossacks had destroyed the better portion of Napoleon's forces, we Germans received the all-superior command to free ourselves from foreign yoke, and we flamed up in manly rage at the slavery too long endured, and we inspired ourselves with the good tunes and bad verses of Körner's songs, and we conquered our freedom; for we do everything which our princes command.

During a time when men were arming for such a strife, a school most unfriendly to all that was French, and which exalted with enthusiasm every-

Digitized by Google

thing which was German in life, art, and letters, naturally found vigorous support. The Romantic school then went hand in hand with the efforts of our Governments and the secret societies, and August Wilhelm Schlegel conspired against Racine with the same object as that with which Minister Stein conspired against Napoleon. The school swam with the stream of the time, which was a stream running back to its source. When at last German patriotism and German nationality thoroughly triumphed, there triumphed too as decidedly with it the popular German-Christian Romantic school, and the "New German Religious-Patriotic Art." Napoleon, the great classic—even as classic as Alexander and Cæsar—fell, and Messrs. August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel, who were quite as romantic as Tom Thumb and Puss-in-Boots, arose—rose as victors.

But here too came the reaction which follows on the heels of every excess. As spiritualistic Christendom was a reaction against the brutal rule of Imperial Roman materialism; as the renewed love for joyous Greek art and learning was the same against the Christian spiritualism, deteriorated to imbecile asceticism; as the awakening of mediæval romance was a counter-action against the prosaic imitation of old classic art; so we now see also a recoil against the restoration of that Catholic-feudal thought, and that knighthood and priest-

Digitized by Google

hood which had been preached in form and language under the greatest contrarieties.

When these highly-praised models, the art-masters of the Middle Age, were so extolled and exalted, their excellence was explained by the fact that those men believed in the subjects which they set forth, and that they in their artless simplicity could do more than the later artists without faith, who had advanced so much further in *technique* or practical execution, and that this faith had wrought miracles in them. And, in faith, how could one otherwise explain the glories of a Fra Angelica da Fiesole or the poem of Brother Ottfried? Therefore, the artists who were in earnest, and would fain reproduce the divine distortions of those marvellous pictures and the holy awkwardness of those marvellous poems, and, in short, the ineffable mysticism of all the old works, made up their minds to repair to the same Hippocrene where the old masters had imbibed their miraculous inspiration. They pilgrimed to Rome, where the Vicegerent of Christ could revive and strengthen consumptive German art with the milk of his she-ass; they went to the bosom of the only beatifying Roman Catholic Apostolic Church.[1] No formal transition was

[1] French version, "ils se dirigèrent vers le bénitier de l'église qui seule beátifie." This is better than the German, as affording a fit antithesis to Hippocrene, or the fountain of youth.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

needed for many hangers-on of the Romantic school; they were—as for example—Görres and Clemens Brentano, born Catholics, and they only renounced the free-thinking views which they had formed. But others were born and brought up as Protestants—for instance, Friedrich Schlegel, Ludwig Tieck, Novalis, Werrer, Schütz, Carové, and Adam Müller, and their conversion required a public confirmation. Here I have only mentioned writers—the number of painters who abjured in shoals the evangelical faith, and with it reason and common-sense, was much greater.[1]

When the world saw how these young people stood in a queue pressing for tickets of admission to the Roman Catholic Church, and crowded again into the old prison-house of the soul, from which their fathers had with such might and pain delivered themselves, it shook its head, in Germany, very significantly. But when it was found that a propaganda of priests and gentlemen who had conspired against the religion and political freedom of Europe had a hand in the game, and that it was really Jesuitism which was enticing German youth to ruin with the soft melodies of romance, as did the rat-

[1] It is simple truth, that the Catholic Church owed its practical morality after the Reformation, and its revival of mediæval art in later times, almost entirely to Protestant influence and action. The word *Vernunft*, here implying both reason and sense, is omitted in the French version.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

catcher the children of Hameln, great displeasure and flaming rage burst up among the friends of intellectual freedom and of Protestantism.[1]

I have classed freedom of thought and Protestantism together, but I hope that though I belong in Germany to the Protestant Church, I shall not be accused of partisan feeling for it. I have truly classed freedom of thought and Protestantism together without partisan feeling,[2] and indeed there is in Germany a friendly relation between them. In any case they are closely connected; in fact, like mother and daughter. And if we can reproach the Protestant Church with many fearful instances of narrow-mindedness, it must be admitted, to its immortal credit, that it permitted free inquiry into Christianity, and freed minds from the yoke of authority, so that bold research could strike forth roots, especially in Germany, and

[1] The allusion to the rat-catcher of Hameln is omitted in the French version, probably because it would not have been generally understood. The poem by Browning on the subject is known to all my readers. I can remember once asking the late Mr. Browning if he had ever read the old Latin or old German poems on the subject, when he informed me he had never heard of them. It was from these poems, as well as what else is given by Kornmann (*Curiosa*), that Heine learned the story.—*Translator.*

[2] One of Heine's very frequent instances of mere repetition without point, such as, when indulged in by an orator before an American audience, once elicited the remark, "Sit down; you're going back into the same hole you came out of."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

learning and science develop themselves independently. German philosophy, though it now ranks itself equal with the Protestant Church, and will even take precedence of it, is always its daughter; as such, it always owes it respect and regard, and the interests of affinity demand alliance between them when both are threatened by their common enemy, Jesuitism. All the friends of freedom of thought, sceptics as well as orthodox, rose simultaneously against the restorers of Catholicism, and, as may be understood, the Liberals, who were not interested either in philosophy or the Protestant Church, but for the cause of municipal freedom, also joined the opposition. But in Germany the Liberals were, and still are, at once professors of philosophy and theologians, and it is always for the idea of freedom which they fight, whether they treat of a subject which is purely political or a philosophical or theological theme. This is shown most plainly in the life of a man who undermined the Romantic school in Germany from its very beginning, and who did most to overthrow it. I mean Johann Heinrich Voss.

This man is quite unknown in France, and yet there are few to whom the Germans are so deeply indebted as regards intellectual progress. He is, perhaps, after Lessing, the greatest citizen of German literature. In any case, he was a great

Digitized by Google

man, and deserves that I do not speak too scantily of him.

His biography is that of almost all German writers of the old school. He was born in Mecklenburg territory in 1751, of poor parents, studied theology, neglected it for poetry and Greek letters, occupied himself very earnestly with both, became a teacher that he might not die of hunger, was schoolmaster at Otterndorf in Hadeln, translated the ancients, and lived poor, frugally, and industriously till his seventy-fifth year. He had a great name among the poets of the old school, but the new Romantic singers continually plucked and pulled at his laurels, and mocked the old-fashioned, honest Voss, who, in true-hearted, and often almost Platt-Deutsch dialect, sung the small middle-class life on the Lower Elbe—a poet who selected as his subject, not mediæval knights and Madonnas, but a plain Protestant parson and his virtuous family,—all of which was sound to the core, citizen-like, and natural, while the new Troubadours were as somnambulistic-sickly, chivalrously-aristocratic, and genially unnatural. To Friedrich Schlegel, the intoxicated singer of the loosely-lascivious romantic Lucinda, how exasperating must the moral John Voss have seemed with his "chaste Louisa" and his "old and venerable pastor of Grünan"? August Wilhelm, who had never given himself

Digitized by Google

over so utterly heart and soul, in all faith, to licentiousness and Catholicism as his brother,[1] could harmonise with Voss much better, and the only rivalry which rose between them was one of translatorship, which was of great advantage to the German language. Voss had, before the rise of the new school, published a version of Homer; he now, with unparalleled industry, did the same for all the heathen poets of antiquity, while August Wilhelm Schlegel translated the Christian poets of the Romantic Catholic time. Both labours were inspired by a secret controversial aim; Voss would advance classic poetry and manner of thought by these works, while August Wilhelm von Schlegel would make the Christian Romantic poets accessible to the public in good translations for imitation and culture. And this antagonism showed itself even in the forms of speech employed by the rivals; for while Schlegel polished his words more sweetly, primly, and prettily, Voss became in his versions ruder and cruder, till at last, from his rough rasping, they were almost unpronounceable; so that, if one slipped on the shining, polished mahogany floor of the Schlegel verses, he stumbled as badly over the metric marble

[1] "Herr August Wilhelm von Schlegel, der es mit der Liederlichkeit und dem Catholicismus nie so ehrlich gemeint hat wie sein Bruder." In the French version softened to "lui n'avait poussé les choses aussi loin que son frère."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

blocks of old Voss. At last, the latter, out of rivalry, translated Shakespeare, which Schlegel had during his first period rendered so admirably into German; but this turned out badly for old Voss, and worse for his publisher; the translation failed out and out.[1] Where Schlegel translates too weakly and softly, as it were, into whipped cream, which people are in doubt whether they should eat or drink, there Voss is as hard as stone, so that one is in fear of breaking the jawbone in pronouncing his verses. But what distinguishes old Voss is the strength and pluck[2] with which he overcame all obstacles; and he fought not only with the German language, but also with the Jesuitical-aristocratic monster who in those days stretched out his misshapen head from the forest-darkness of German literature; and Voss struck him hard and wounded him sore.

Wolfgang Menzel, a German writer, who is known as one of the bitterest foes of Voss, calls him a Low-Saxon peasant; and, in spite of the abusive meaning, the appellation is very appropriate, for Voss is really a Low-Saxon peasant,

[1] *Ganz und gar.*

[2] *Kraft.* Germans boast a great deal of their word *Gemüth*, but say nothing at all of *Kraft*, out of which, however, they get, now and then, much more than we do out of "strength," which is our own fault. Herein we owe a great debt of gratitude to Carlyle, who taught us to make the most of what we have in Saxon-German words.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

as was Luther. He was wanting in all that was chivalric, courteous, or graceful; he belonged altogether to that hard and strong, vigorous and manly race to whom Christianity had to be preached with fire and sword, who did not submit to it till they had been beaten in three battles, yet who always kept in manners and customs much Northern heathen stubbornness, and showed themselves in matter-of-fact or moral conflicts as brave and obstinate as their own old gods. And when I consider Johann Heinrich Voss in his controversies and in all his reality, it seems to me as if I saw old one-eyed Odin himself who left Asgard to become a schoolmaster in Otterndorf in the land of Hadeln, to teach the blonde Holsteiners Latin declension and the Christian catechism, and who in his leisure hours translated Greek poets into German, and borrowed the hammer of Thor to beat their verses into shape, and who at last, weary of the tiresome work, hit poor Fritz Stolberg a finishing blow on the head.

And that was a fine story. Friedrich Count of Stolberg was a poet of the old school, very famous indeed in Germany, perhaps less for his poetic talents than from his title of Count, which went for more in those days in German literature than it would now. But Fritz Stolberg was a liberal man of noble heart, and he was a friend

Digitized by Google

of the citizen-youth who had formed a poetic school in Göttingen. I recommend French literary men to read the preface to the poems of Hölty in which Johann Heinrich Voss sketches the idyllic life in common of that band of poets to which he and Fritz Stolberg had belonged. At last these two were all that remained of the old company; and when Fritz Stolberg went over with *éclat* to the Catholic Church, and abjured reason and the love of freedom, and became an ally to obscurantism, and by his illustrious example enticed many weaklings to follow, Johann Friedrich Voss, the old man of seventy years, publicly opposed the friend of his youth and wrote the little work *Wie ward Fritz Stolberg ein Unfreier*—"How it was that Fitz Stolberg became a serf." In it he analysed all the life of his subject; how the aristocratic nature had always lurked in the fraternised Count; how it came out more and more after the events of the French Revolution; how Stolberg secretly allied himself to the so-called *Adelskette*, or chain of nobles who worked against the French principles of freedom; how these nobles combined with the Jesuits; how it was hoped that by restoring Catholicism the interests of the nobility would be advanced, and how, principally, the restoration of the Christian-Catholic Middle Age, and the destruction of Protestant freedom of thought and political middle-

Digitized by Google

class privileges, could be brought about. So German democracy and German aristocracy, which had fraternised so unthinkingly before the Revolution, when the former hoped, and the latter feared nothing, now stood, as old men, face to face in mortal combat.

That portion of the German public who did not understand the terrible necessity of this combat, blamed poor Voss for his merciless exposure of domestic events and little incidents of life, which formed, however, in their connection, a series of proofs. There were, of course, so-called noble souls, who, in all sublimity, above such small-minded raking into rubbish, accused poor Voss of vulgar gossiping. Others, small citizen-folk, who feared lest the curtain might be drawn from before their own miserable affairs, manifested indignation at this violation of literary custom, according to which all personalities and all revelations of private life should be strictly forbidden. And as Fritz Stolberg died just at this time, and as his death was attributed to grief and trouble, and as after his death there appeared the *Liebesbüchlein* or "Little Book of Love," in which he with piously-affected, forgiving, true Jesuitical tones spoke of his poor deluded friend, then the tears of German pity flowed fast; German Michel wept his biggest drops; much soft-hearted wrath rose in a storm against old Voss, and the bitterest

Digitized by Google

curses which he had to endure came from the very men for whose spiritual and temporal welfare he had most bravely combated.

One may hopefully rely in Germany on the sympathy and rising tears of the multitude when one is hardly handled in a debate. The Germans are like old women, who never neglect to attend an execution, where, crowding in as the most eager spectators, seeing the poor sinner, they bewail most bitterly his sufferings, and even defend him. But these female mourners, who wail so vigorously at literary hangings and decapitations, would be direly disappointed if the poor sinner whose chastisement they await should be suddenly reprieved, and they be obliged to trot home without having seen anything; in such a case their increased wrath falls on the one who deceived their hopes.[1]

But altogether the Voss trouble had a great effect, and checked in public opinion the epidemic of passion for the Middle Age. For the controversy had excited all Germany; a great part of the public decidedly approved of Voss, a greater portion only of his principles. So there were writings and refutations, and the last days of the life of the old man were not a little embittered by the business. He had to deal with the very worst of foes, with

[1] All of the preceding, from the words "The Germans are like old women," is omitted in the French version. contrary to French point as Shakespeare!

Digitized by Google

priests, who attacked him in every guise; and not only the crypto-Catholics, but also the pietists, the quietists, the Lutheran mystics, and all the supernaturalistics of the Protestant Church, who have so many differences among themselves, all united with great common hatred against Johann Heinrich Voss the Rationalist. This is a term applied in Germany to those who give to reason a place even in religion, in opposition to the Spiritualists, who have to a greater or lesser degree renounced all recognition of it. The latter, in their hatred of the poor Rationalists, being not unlike the lunatics of an asylum, who, though afflicted by the most contrary or conflicting follies, get on tolerably well together, but who are inspired with bitterest hatred against the man whom they regard as their common enemy, and who is no other than the hospital doctor, who would gladly give them all their senses.

But if the Romantic school found itself utterly condemned in public opinion by the revelation of its intrigues with the Papacy, it suffered at the same time in its own temple an annihilating condemnation, and that too from the mouth of one of the gods whom its leaders themselves had set up. For Wolfgang Goethe came down from his pedestal, and uttered sentence of condemnation of the Schlegels, of the same high-priests who had perfumed him with their incense. This voice dispersed the whole spectral apparition; the ghosts of the

Digitized by Google

Middle Age fled, the owls retreated into their dusky ruined castles, the ravens fluttered back to the ancient belfries. Friedrich Schlegel went to Vienna, where he heard mass every day and ate roasted chickens, while August Wilhelm Schlegel retired into the pagoda of Brahma.

But, to speak plainly, Goethe played in all this a very equivocal part, and one by no means deserving unequivocal praise. It may be true that the Schlegels did *not* act altogether in a straightforward way with him, perhaps because in their warfare with the old school they found it expedient to set up a living poet as an example, and found none better fitted for it than Goethe, and, hoping that he would help them on, built him an altar, and burnt incense before him, and made the multitude kneel to him. And they had him just at hand. There is an avenue of beautiful plum-trees which leads from Jena to Weimar—those plums taste deliciously when one is thirsty in the summer heat—and the Schlegels often walked that way, and had many an interview with Goethe the Privy Councillor, who was always a great diplomatist, and who calmly listened to the Schlegels and incidentally smiled at their discourse, and invited them to his table, and otherwise made himself agreeable, and so on. And they made overtures to Schiller; but he was a straightforward man, and would have nothing to do with them. The correspondence

Digitized by Google

between him and Goethe, which was published three years ago, throws much light on the relations between these two poets and the Schlegels. Goethe smiles them away with an air of superiority; Schiller is vexed at their impertinent craving for scandal and calls them puppy-dandies.[1]

But however grandly Goethe bore it off, he all the same owed the greater part of his renown to the Schlegels. They had introduced and advanced the study of his works, and the despicable, abusive manner in which he finally cast them off smells of ingratitude. Perhaps the very sagacious Goethe was vexed that the Schlegels only wished to use him as a means for their own ends; perhaps these ends threatened to compromise him as Minister of a Protestant state; perhaps it was the old heathen wrath of the gods which awoke in him when he understood their dull Catholic impulses; for just as Voss resembled the hard, grim, one-eyed Odin, so Goethe was like Jupiter in thought and form. The one struck mightily with Thor's hammer; Goethe had only to shake indignantly his ambrosial locks, and the Schlegels trembled and slunk away.

A public document embodying this judgment of Goethe's appeared in the second number of his jour-

[1] *Laffen*, French version *étourneaux*. In modern English, "dudes," dandies, puppies, silly fellows. "Dudes" is from *duds*, clothes. Provincial English, scarecrows.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

nal, *Kunst und Alterthum*—"Art and Antiquity"—bearing the title "On the Christian Patriotic New German Art." With this article Goethe caused an Eighteenth of Brumaire in German literature, for while he in it so roughly drove the Schlegels out of the temple, and attracted so many of their most zealous youthful followers to himself, and was applauded by the public, to whom the Schlegel Directory had become a curse, he founded his own autocracy in German literature. From that time the Schlegels were no longer thought of; people spoke of them only now and then, as they speak now of Barras or Gohier; nothing was heard of Romantic and Classic poetry; all was Goethe and nothing but Goethe. It is true that certain poets came meanwhile on the stage, who were little inferior to him in power and imagination, but from courtesy they recognised him as their chief; they surrounded him in homage, they kissed his hands and knelt before him; but these grandees of Parnassus differed from the common crowd in this, that they kept their laurel crowns on their heads in his presence. Sometimes they found fault with him, but were always vexed when a lesser light presumed to do so. However irritated the aristocracy may be with their monarch, they are still more angered when the plebs rise against him; and the intellectual aristocrats in Germany had during the last twenty years good cause to

Digitized by Google

be out of temper with Goethe. As I myself said many a time in those days with abundant bitterness: "Goethe was like Louis XI., who suppressed the nobility and raised the *tiers état*."

This was repulsive. Goethe was afraid of every independent and original writer, and lauded and extolled every insignificant intellect, and carried it so far that it at last came to be a patent of mediocrity to be praised by him.

I shall speak in another place of the recent poets who appeared during the empire of Goethe. It is a new forest, whose trees are only now showing full growth since the fall of the century oak which so widely grew beyond and overshadowed them.

As I have said, there was not wanting an opposition to this great tree, or Goethe, and it raged against him bitterly. Men of the most varied views united in this opposition. The Old Believers and the Orthodox took it ill that in the trunk of the great tree was no niche with a holy image to be found, and that, in fact, the naked Dryads of old heathen days worked evil or witchcraft round it, and they would gladly, like St. Bonifacius, have laid a consecrated axe to the roots of the magic oak. The New Believers, the professors of Liberalism, were, on the contrary, ill-tempered because it could not be turned to a Tree of Liberty, or, least of all, be made into a

Digitized by Google

barricade. In fact, the tree was too high for this, no one could stick a red flag on its summit. But the great public honoured this tree because it was so independent and grand, because it filled the world so sweetly with perfume, because its branches rose so broadly and boldly to heaven, so that it seemed as if the stars were its golden fruit.

The opposition to Goethe began with the publication in the year 1821 of the so-called false *Wanderjahre*, which appeared under the title of *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (the years of wandering or of travelling apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister), that is, soon after the fall of the Schlegels. It was printed by Gottfried Basse in Quedlinberg. Goethe had previously announced that he would publish under this title a continuation of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahren*—"Wilhelm Meister's Years of Apprenticeship"—and singularly enough this continuation appeared at the same time as its literary wraith.[1] In it not only was Goethe's style imitated, but the hero of the original romance set forth as main actor. This aping did not so much indicate great wit as great tact, and as the author kept himself anonymous for some time, and was sought for in vain, the interest of the public was artificially kept up. It

[1] *Doppelgänger*, wraith, fetch, *alter-ego*, double, doublegoer. One's own ghost, or second apparition. French version, "parodie littéraire."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

appeared at last that the author was a country clergyman, who had been before utterly unknown. His name was Pustkuchen, which in French means *omelette soufflée*,[1] a name which exactly indicates the character of the man. It was only the old pietistic leaven which had puffed itself up æsthetically. Goethe was reproached in this book because his poems had no moral aim; that he could shape no noble forms, but only vulgar figures, while Schiller, having set forth the noblest ideal characters, was therefore a greater poet.

This last point, that Schiller was greater than Goethe, was the great subject of controversy which called forth this book. People fell into a fashion of comparing the productions of both poets, and opinions were divided. The Schillerites vaunted the moral grandeur of a Max Piccolomini, a Thecla, a Marquis of Posa, and other characters in their repertoire, declaring that Goethe's Philina, Kätchen, Clarchen, and other beautiful creatures were immoral wretches. The Goetheans admitted, smiling, that these personages, and perhaps others, did not appear to be "moral," but that the propagation of morality—as required of these poems—was not at all the aim of art, because in art there are *no* aims, as in the construction of the universe, into

[1] Rather dough-nuts or pancakes than an omelette, as Heine indicates in the next sentence, by using the word *Sauerteig*.—*Translator*.

Digitized by Google

which man has forced his ideas of end and aim. Art, like the world, exists for itself alone. So, they argued, as the world must ever be the same, though men incessantly vary in their opinions, so art should be quite independent of the temporal views of humanity. Art should therefore be free from morality, which is ever changing in the world, so often as a new religion displaces an old one. In fact, since after a few centuries have flown, a new religion always appears in the world, and passing into its manners, assumes power as a new system of morality; so in every corresponding age the art-works of the past are declared to be immoral and heretical, if they are judged according to the current standard of morals. As we ourselves have seen, good Christians, who condemn the flesh as diabolical, suffer pangs at seeing Greek statues of the gods; chaste monks have tied napkins round an antique Venus; we have beheld very recently, ridiculous fig-leaves stuck to naked statues, and a pious Quaker sacrificed all his wealth to buying up and burning the most beautiful pictures of Giulio Romano; truly he deserved to go to heaven for it, and there be thrashed every day with rods! A religion which placed God in the material, and which consequently regarded only the flesh as divine, must, when it passed into manners, develop a morality according to which only those works of art are to be prized which

Digitized by Google

exalt the flesh, and according to which, on the contrary, Christian works of art, which only set forth the nothingness of the flesh, should be rejected as immoral. Indeed, the works of art which are perfectly moral in one country are regarded as the contrary in another, where another religion has passed into manners and customs. Thus, for example, our plastic arts excite the horror of a pious Mahometan, while, on the other hand, many things which are extremely innocent in an Eastern harem are disgusting to a Christian. In India, where the profession of a bayadere is not offensive to morals, the drama of Vasantasena, whose heroine is a venal prostitute, is not regarded as immoral, but should one dare to give it in the Théâtre Française, all the parterre would scream out "Immorality!" the same parterre which sees daily with delight dramas of intrigue, in which the heroines are young widows, who end by gaily marrying, instead of burning themselves with their deceased husbands, as Indian morals require.[1]

Therefore the Goetheans, from this point of view, regard art as an independent second world, which they place so high that all efforts or works

[1] All of which did not prevent *Le Dieu et la Bayadère*, which sets forth the plot of Vasantasena, from becoming a very popular ballet in Paris and all over the world in the Thirties. Goethe has embodied it in a poem.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

of mankind, their religion and morals, move and pass far below it, shifting and changing. But I cannot unconditionally worship it. The Goetheans let themselves be led by it to proclaim art itself as the highest, and turn aside from the requirements of the real world, to which precedence is due.

Schiller attached himself much more closely than Goethe to this world, and for this he deserves praise. The spirit of his age took firm and fast hold of Friedrich Schiller; it struggled with him, was conquered by him, followed him to the field, bore his banner; and it was the same banner under which they fought so enthusiastically in those days yon side the Rhine, and for which we are always ready to shed our best blood. Schiller wrote for the great ideas of the Revolution; he destroyed the intellectual Bastiles; he built at the Temple of Liberty, and indeed at that great temple which should enclose all races like a brotherly community, for he was cosmopolite. He began with that hatred of the past which we see in his "Robbers," where he is like a little Titan who has played truant from school, and drunk schnapps, and smashed in Jupiter's windows, and ended with that love for the future which we already see blooming in "Don Carlos" like a forest of flowers, he himself being the Marquis of Posa, who is at once prophet and soldier, and who under

Digitized by Google

a Spanish cloak bears the noblest heart which ever loved and suffered in all Germany.

The poet, the lesser after-creator, is like our dear Lord in this, that he makes his men after his own image. If Karl Moor and the Marquis Posa are all Schiller himself, so Goethe resembles his own Werther, Wilhelm Meister, and Faust, in whom we can study all the phases of his life. If Schiller throws himself headlong into history, becomes enthusiastic for the social progress of mankind, and sings universal history, Goethe plunges into individual feelings, art or nature. Goethe the Pantheist finally took up the history of Nature as his chief occupation, and gave us the results of his researches, not only in poems, but in scientific works. His indifferentism was likewise a result of his Pantheism.

It is—more's the pity!—true, that Pantheism has not unfrequently made men into indifferentists. "If everything is God," they said, "it is all one whether a man busies himself with clouds or with antique gems, popular ballads or monkeys' bones, mankind or comedians." But just there lies the error: all is not God, but God is all. God does not manifest himself in equal measure in everything; he manifests himself far more in different degrees in different things, and everything feels in itself the impulse to attain a higher grade of divinity; and that is the great law of progress in

Digitized by Google

Nature. The knowledge of this law, which was most profoundly set forth by the Saint-Simonists, elevates Pantheism to a view of the universe which does not at all conduce to indifferentism, but to the most self-sacrificing effort. No, God did not manifest himself equally in all things, as Wolfgang Goethe believed, who thereby became an indifferentist, and instead of occupying himself with the highest interests of mankind, devoted life to artistic play, anatomy, theory of colours, botany, and meteorology. God manifests himself more or less in things; he lives in this constant manifestation. He is in movement, action, in time. His holy breath inspires and waves the leaves of history; this is the real Book of God, and that Friedrich Schiller divined and felt, and he became a "retrospective prophet," and he wrote the "Fall of the Netherlands," the "Thirty Years' War," and the "Maid of Orleans" and "Tell."[1]

It is true that Goethe also sang of several great

[1] There are here important omissions and a transposition in the French text, as also a variation. The following material alteration is to be found in the first German edition.

"If God is contained in all things, it is indifferent wherewith man busies himself, be it with clouds or antique gems, or popular ballads or monkeys' bones, or mankind or comedians. But God is not only in the "Substance," as the ancients understood him, but also in the "Process," as Hegel expresses it, and as he is also conceived by the Saint-Simonists. This God of the Saint-Simonists, who not only directs progress, but is progress itself,

Digitized by Google

histories of emancipation, but he sang them as an artist. As he discontentedly rejected Christian enthusiasm, which was contrary to his whole nature, and did not, or did not wish, to understand the philosophic enthusiasm of our time, because he feared lest he should be thereby disturbed in his serene tranquillity of soul, he handled enthusiasm historically as something given, as stuff to be worked up. So spirit was treated as if it were matter, and he gave it a beautiful and pleasing form. And so he became the greatest artist in our literature, and everything which he wrote was a gracefully turned work of art.

The model of the master makes the man, and so there sprung up in Germany that literary epoch which I once designated as the *Kunst-periode* or period of art, and to which I attributed the most deplorable influence on the political development of the German people. But in this relation I never denied the intrinsic value of the works of Goethe. They adorn our dear Fatherland as beautiful statues adorn a garden, but they are statues. One may fall in love with them, but

---

and differs from the old heathen god imprisoned in substance just as much as from the Christian *Dieu pur-esprit*, who from heaven governs the world with a loving, flute-like voice; this *Dieu-progrès* gives to Pantheism a view of the universe which by no means conduces to indifferentism, but to the most self-sacrificing efforts to advance.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

they are sterile. The Goethean poems do not develop action, like those of Schiller. The deed is the child of the word, and the beautiful words of Goethe are childless, which is the curse of all which is born only of art. The statue which Pygmalion made was of a beautiful woman; even the master fell in love with her, and she was inspired with life by his kisses; but, so far as I know, she never had any children.[1] I believe that Charles Nodier has said something of the kind in the same relation, and it occurred to me yesterday, while wandering through the lower halls of the Louvre, I looked at the ancient statues of the gods. There they stood with their silent white eyes, a mysterious melancholy in them, perhaps a mournful memory of Egypt, that land of the dead whence they took origin, or sadly yearning for the life of yore whence other deities have driven them, or pain for perished immortality; they seemed to await the word which should restore them to life, and stir them from their cold stiff immovability. Strange these antiques reminded me of Goethe's poems, which are quite as gracefully modelled, as grand and as tranquil, and which seemed also to feel with sorrow that their stiffness and cold kept them from our warm life;

[1] For a note on this favourite subject of reference with Heine, see the translation of the "Florentine Nights."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

that they do not suffer and rejoice with us, and that they are no human beings, but unfortunate mixtures of divinity and stone.

These few hints which I have given explain the ill-feeling of the different parties which spoke out in Germany against Goethe. The orthodox were indignant at the Great Heathen, as he was generally termed, for they feared his influence on the people, in whom he inspired his views of the world and all things by his laughing poems, and even in the most apparently light and airy songs. They saw in him a dangerous foe to the Cross, which he confessed was to him as antipathetic as bugs, garlic, and tobacco; at least, that is pretty nearly as he expresses it in the *Xenia*, which he did not fear to publish in Germany, where such vermin, garlic, tobacco, and the Cross rule everywhere in a holy alliance. Yet it was not exactly this in Goethe which displeased us, the men of agitation. What we did not like and blamed was the barrenness of his works, and that art-spirit which was through him disseminated through Germany, exercising a quietising influence on German youth which worked in opposition to a political regeneration of our native land. So the indifferent Pantheist was attacked by the most opposing factions. To speak French, the extreme Right and Left united against Goethe, allied themselves against him, and, while the black priest

Digitized by Google

beat him with the crucifix, an enraged sans-culottist attacked him with a pike.

Wolfgang Menzel, who led the attack against Goethe with a display of cleverness and wit which was worthy of a better cause,[1] did not oppose him as spiritual Christian or discontented patriot; he rather based his battling partially on the last utterance of Friedrich Schlegel, who, after his fall, wailed over Goethe with the words, "He has no central point." Menzel went still further, and explained that Goethe was no genius, only a talent, and praised Schiller for opposition. This was some time before the Revolution of July. Menzel was then the greatest devotee of the Middle Age in art as well as institutions; he scorned with ceaseless wrath Johann Heinrich Voss, and praised with unheard-of zeal Joseph Görres. Therefore, his hatred of Goethe was sincere, and he wrote against him from conviction, and not, as many thought, to make himself known. And though I myself was then an opponent of Goethe, I was displeased with the

[1] In the French version we have, "Un écrivain Allemand, qui avait publié une collection de bons-mots intitulée *Streckverse*, et qu'on nommait le Saphir chrétien pour le distinguer de M. Saphir, le spirituel bon-motiste de Vienne, M. Wolfgang Menzel." The allusion here is to the fact that Saphir was a Jew. I once was his *vis-à-vis* every day for a week at a table-d'hôte in Munich. I thought him clever, but rather coarse. But that was in 1847. *Tempora mutantur.—Translator.*

Digitized by Google

bitterness with which Menzel criticised him, and I regretted this want of respect and regard.[1] I remarked that Goethe was always the king of our literature, and that when the critical scalpel was applied to such a subject, one should never fail to do so with proper respect and courtesy, like the executioner, who, when about to decapitate Charles I., knelt before the king and begged his sovereign pardon.

Among the foes of Goethe we must class the Court-Councillor Müllner, and the one friend who remained true to him, Professor Schütz, son of the elder Schütz; and certain others who were less distinguished; as, for instance, Spaun, who was long imprisoned for political offences; belonged to these publicly declared enemies. Among us, in confidence, it was a very mixed society. What was done among them I have declared in detail; it is much harder to indicate the particular motive which inspired every one to publish his anti-Goethean feelings. I only know the real impulse of one person accurately, and as that one is I myself, I will candidly confess that it was envy.[2] But to my credit be it said, that in Goethe I never

[1] In the French version, "Quoique j'eusse puis rang parmi les adversaires de Goëthe, je n'etais pas moins mécontent de la rudesse de pareilles diatribes, et dans une critique que je fis de leurs auteurs, je me plaignis de leur manque de piété."—*Translator.*

[2] This is a very ingenious *tour de force.* Heine might as well

Digitized by Google

attacked the poet, but the man. I have never been able to see faults in his poems like those critics who, with their finely polished glasses, have detected spots in the moon. Sharp and clever folk! what they took for blemishes were blooming forests, silver streams, sublime mountains, and smiling valleys.

Nothing is more absurd than the depreciation of Goethe in favour of Schiller, which was not honourably meant as to the latter, because he was praised only in order to degrade Goethe. Did not people know that those highly-lauded, high-ideal forms, those altar-pictures of virtue and morality which Schiller produced, were far easier to make than those sinful, petty-worldly, soiled doves whom Goethe gives us in his works? Do they not know that mediocre painters generally depict saints the size of life on their canvases, but that it requires a great master to paint a Spanish beggar-boy hunting vermin, a drunken Dutch boor or one whose tooth is being drawn, and ugly old women true to life and technically perfect, as we see them in small Dutch cabinet pictures? The great and terrible is much easier to set forth in art than the little

---

have declared that he was envious of Napoleon as Goethe, but by so doing he directs suspicion from the envy which he really felt as to Madame de Staël, the Schlegels, Cousin, and others. —*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

and neat.[1] The Egyptian sorcerers could imitate many of the feats of Moses, such as the miracle of the snakes, the blood, and even the frogs, but when he produced what seemed to be much easier magic-work, that is, vermin, they confessed their weakness, saying, "It is the finger of God." Rail if you will at the vulgarities in *Faust*, at the scene on the Brocken, in the Auerbach-cellar, scold at the looseness of Wilhelm Meister, but you cannot imitate them—it is the finger of Goethe. But you would not imitate them if you could, and I hear you say with disgust, "We are not conjurors, but good Christians." And that you are no conjurors I well know.

Goethe's greatest merit is the perfection of all which he sets forth; in it one part is never weak and another strong, one portion well painted while others are only sketched, no entanglements or inequalities, no preference for details. Every character in his romances and dramas is treated as thoroughly as a leading personage. So it is with Homer and Shakespeare. And in the works of all great poets there are really no secondary characters; every one is leader for the time in his part. Such poets are like absolute princes, who

[1] This is ingenious, but untrue. According to it, Teniers is a greater artist than Michael Angelo. Very few artists have ever succeeded in the great and terrible, while the number of very clever *petits-maîtres* is very great.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

do not allot to men any independent value, but esteem them according to their own will, or their sovereign approval.[1] Once, when a French ambassador remarked to the Czar Paul of Russia that a very influential Prussian statesman was interested in a certain affair, the Emperor interrupted him by saying with emphasis, "There is in this country no man of importance save the one to whom I speak, and so long as I converse with him he is important." An absolute poet, who had also received his power by divine grace, regards in the same manner as the one of greatest weight any one whom he for the time causes to speak or who exists from his pen, and from such art-despotism resulted the wondrous perfection of the most insignificant characters in the works of Homer, Shakespeare, and Goethe.

But if I have spoken rather hardly of Goethe's enemies, I should treat even more harshly his apologists, for most of them have been guilty of even greater follies. One of them, Eckermann, who is really not wanting in cleverness, approaches in this respect the ridiculous. In the war against Pustkuchen, Karl Immermann, who is now really our first dramatic poet, won his spurs as a critic by publishing an admirable little work. The men

[1] The conclusion of this passage is omitted in the French version.

Digitized by Google

of Berlin distinguished themselves mostly on this occasion. Goethe's boldest champion was Varnhagen von Ense, a man who has in his heart thoughts as great as the world, and who expresses them in words which are as precious as finely-cut gems. His was a great mind, to whose opinion Goethe ever attached the greatest value. And I may here mention that Wilhelm von Humboldt had, some time before, written a very admirable work on Goethe.

Within the last ten years every book-fair at Leipzig has produced works on Goethe. The researches of Schubart on this subject belong to the best works of higher criticism, and what Häring, who writes under the name of Willibald Alexis, in several publications, has said of Goethe was as valuable as intelligent. Professor Zimmermann of Hamburg has in oral lectures uttered the most admirable criticisms of the great poet, the best of which appear, scantily, yet all the more earnest and profound in his "Dramaturgic Leaves." In several German universities courses of lectures on Goethe are read, and it was *Faust* with which the public chiefly busied itself. It was in many ways continued and commented on; it became the secular Bible of the Germans.[1]

[1] There are men who collect every work on *Faust*, or in which there is any reference to it. I have a catalogue of books on this subject alone.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

I should not be a German if I did not here offer some elucidations of *Faust*, since from the greatest thinker down to the smallest tinker in literature, from the philosopher to the doctor of philosophy, every one tries his talents on this book. But it is really as vast as the Bible, and, like it, embraces heaven and earth with man and his exegesis. The subject is here again the reason why *Faust* is so popular, because the author drew his material from popular legend, which testifies to the unconscious depth of perception of his genius, since he always grasped what was nearest and fittest. I may assume that *Faust* is known to the reader, for the work has become celebrated in France of late years; but I do not know whether the old popular tradition itself is as familiar, and whether there is sold at your country fairs or markets a book of grey blotting-paper, badly printed, and adorned with coarse woodcuts, in which may be read in detail how the arch-sorcerer Johannes Faustus, a learned doctor, who had mastered all the sciences, at last threw away his books and made a compact with the devil, by which he was to enjoy all the pleasures of earth, but give in return his soul to infernal ruin. The men of the Middle Age, whenever they perceived in any man great intellectual power, at once ascribed it to a compact with the devil; and Albertus Magnus, Raimond Lullius, Theophrastus Paracelsus, Agrippa

Digitized by Google

von Nettesheim, and in England, Roger Bacon, all passed for magicians, black-artists, and invokers of demons. But far stranger things were said and sung of Doctor Faustus, who demanded of the devil not only knowledge but substantial enjoyments. This is also the Faust who invented printing, and lived at a time when people began to preach against power and Church authority and seek into all things with freedom, so that with Faust the mediæval period of faith ends, and the modern critical era of science begins. It is, in fact, deeply significant that when, according to popular opinion, Faust lived, the Reformation began, and that he discovered the art which gave knowledge the victory over faith—I mean printing—an art, however, which took from us our Roman Catholic peace of mind, and cast us into doubts and revolutions, or, as some others would say, handed us over to the devil. But no! knowledge, the true understanding of things by means of reason, will at last give us those pleasures which Catholic Christianity has so long cheated us out of. We recognise that men are destined not only to a heavenly, but also to an earthly equality. The political brotherhood which is preached to us by philosophy is more beneficent than the purely spiritual fraternity to which Christianity has called us, and knowledge will become the word, and the word deed, so that we

Digitized by Google

may, during our lives, be happy here on earth; and if, over and above this, we are also to have heavenly happiness after death, as Christianity expressly declares, it will certainly be very acceptable and agreeable.

All of this the German people had long surmised, for it is itself that learned Dr. Faust; it is that same spiritualist who by the spirit perceived the insufficiency of the spirit, and longed for material pleasures and rehabilitation of the flesh. But, bound as we still were in the symbolism of Catholic poetry, where God was regarded as representing the spirit and the devil the flesh, that rehabilitation was regarded as a falling from God and an alliance with Satan.

Yet it will be some time before that will be fulfilled in Germany which is prophesied so significantly in this poem, ere we perceive the usurpations of the spirit, and vindicate the rights of the flesh. That will be the Revolution—the great daughter of the Reformation.

Less known in France than *Faust* is the *West-Oestlicher Divan*—"The Divan of the Western Orient"—a later work, unknown to Madame de Staël, and which we must here especially mention. It contains the manners of thought and feeling of the East, expressed in flower-like songs and sententious sayings, in which all is perfumed, and glows like a harem full of amorous odalisques with

Digitized by Google

gazelle-like eyes darkened with *kohl*, and yearning snow-white arms. Over it the reader trembles with desire, as did the happy Gaspar Debureau, when he in Constantinople stood on the ladder and saw *de haut en bas* what the Commander of the Faithful only saw *de bas en haut*. At times the reader feels as if he lay comfortably stretched out on a Persian carpet, smoking from a long-tubed *narghileh* the yellow tobacco of Turkistan, while a black slave-girl cools him with a fan of peacock-feathers, and a beautiful boy holds out to him a cup of Mocha coffee; for Goethe has here put into verse the most intoxicating joys of life, and these are so light, so charming, so softly inspired, so etherial, that we wonder that it could be done in German. Withal he gives in prose the most delightful explanations of manners and life in the East, as of the patriarchal life of the Arabs; and there Goethe is ever smiling and innocent as a child, yet wise as a grey old man. This prose is as transparent as the green sea in a summer noon, and calm, when one can see far down into the deep, and perceive sunken cities with their long-perished magnificence; and again it is often as magical, as mysteriously full of meaning as the heavens, when twilight gathers o'er them, and the great thoughts of Goethe come forth one by one, pure and golden as the stars. The enchantment of this book is indescribable; it is a

Digitized by Google

salaam which the East sends to the West; there are in it fantastic flowers, sensuous red roses, hortensias like the bare white breasts of beautiful girls, delightful, merry dandelions, purple digitalis like long fingers, curling crocuses, and hiding among them quiet German violets.[1] But this *salaam* signifies that the West, weary of its meagre, freezing Spiritualism, would fain refresh itself from the sound bodily world of the East. Goethe, after expressing in *Faust* his discontent with the abstractly spiritual and his longing for real pleasures, threw himself with all his soul into the arms of sensuality when he wrote the "Western Oriental Divan."

It is, therefore, a significant fact that this book appeared soon after *Faust*. It was Goethe's last phase, and his example had a great effect on our literature. Our lyric poets now sang the East. And it may be remarked that while Goethe sang so joyously of Persia and Arabia, he always manifested the most decided dislike of India. The bizarre, bewildered, and obscure elements of this country repelled him, and it may be that his aversion was partly due to his suspecting that the Sanskrit studies of the Schlegels and their friends had a Roman Catholic hidden meaning. These

[1] "Puritan pansies," as Edgar A. Poe expressed it. In connection with the "Western Oriental Divan" I would mention a modest but most agreeable little work—"Poets and Poetry of the East," by William Rounseville Alger of Boston.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

gentlemen indeed regarded Hindostan as the cradle of the Catholic organisation of the universe; they saw in it the pattern of their hierarchy; they found in it their trinity, their penances, their expiations, and all their favourite hobbies. Goethe's repugnance for India annoyed these people not a little, and for this reason Wilhelm Schlegel called him "a heathen converted to Islam."

Among the books on Goethe which appeared during the past year, there is a posthumous work by Johannes Falk—*Goethe aus näherem persönlichen Umgange dargestellt* (Goethe Depicted from Personal Intimacy)—which deserves the best mention. In it the author has, in addition to a detailed analysis of *Faust* (which of course could not be wanting), given us the most admirable views as to Goethe, and has shown him in all the phases of life, truly and impartially, with all his virtues and failings. Here we see Goethe in relation to his mother, whose nature was so wonderfully reflected in her son; then as the natural historian studying a caterpillar which has spun itself into a cocoon and will reappear as a butterfly; again conversing with the great Herder, who seriously reproves him for the indifferentism with which he regards the rising of the human race from its chrysalis; or we behold him at the court of the Grand Duke of Weimar, merrily improvising among blonde maids of honour, like Apollo amid the

Digitized by Google

sheep of King Admetus, or yet again refusing, with the pride of a Dalai-Lama, to recognise Kotzebue, and how the latter, to take him down, institutes a public festival in honour of Schiller—and everywhere the same clever, handsome, amiable, charmingly refreshing form like that of an ancient god.

And in truth one finds to perfection in Goethe that union of personality with genius such as we wish to have in remarkable men. His exterior was as deeply impressive and significant as the word which lived in his works, and his form was harmonious, clear, cheerful, nobly proportioned, and one could study Greek art in him as in an antique. This dignified body was never bent by Christian worm-like humility, the features of his face never distorted by Christian wretchedness, his eyes were never shy, like those of a Christian sinner, never inspired cantingly, rantingly, or with celestial gleams. No; his eyes were calm as those of a god; and it is the sign by which the gods are known that their glance is steady and that their eyes never vacillate. Therefore, when Agni, Varuna, Yama, and Indra assume the form of Nala, at the wedding of Damayanti, the bride recognises her beloved by the winking of his eyes, since, as I have said, the eyes of the gods are always immovable. The eyes of Napoleon had this peculiarity; therefore I am persuaded that he was a god. Goethe's eyes were as divine in

Digitized by Google

old age as in his youth.[1] Time could cover his head with snow, but never bend it. He also held it proudly and highly; and when he spoke, he became greater, and when he put forth his hand, it was as though he would show unto the stars in heaven their appointed course. It was thought that there played about his mouth a cold expression of egoism, but this trait is peculiar to the eternal gods,[2] and even to the great Jupiter, the father of the gods, with whom I have before compared Goethe. In truth, when I visited him at Weimar and stood before him, I glanced involuntarily to one side to see whether there was not the eagle holding the lightning in his beak. I was about to address him in Greek, but observing that he understood German, I remarked to him in the latter that the plums on the road between Jena and Weimar tasted deliciously. During many a winter night had I reflected what sublime and profound things I would say to Goethe, should I ever meet him; and when I at last saw him, I told him that the Saxon plums were good. And Goethe smiled—smiled with the same lips which

[1] It is worth observing that W. von Humboldt, Von Brügsch, the great egyptologist of Berlin, and to a certain degree Bismarck, had or have an expression like that of Goethe.—*Translator.*

[2] Lactantius (*Div. Instit. de Falsa Religione*, lib. i. c. 9) goes further than Heine, for he adds to this trait all the other vices as constituting the character of a classic deity.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

had kissed the beautiful Leda, Europa, Danae, Semele, and so many other princesses, or even common nymphs.[1]

Les dieux s'en vont. Goethe is dead. He died on the 22nd of March 1832, that significant year in which our world lost its greatest celebrities. It seems as if in that year Death had suddenly become aristocratic, and would distinguish the notable men of earth by sweeping them into the grave. Perhaps he wished to found there in the realm of shadows a house of peers, and in this case the *fournée* (batch) was very well selected. Or did Death desire, on the contrary, to favour the Democrats, by destroying with the men of renown also their authority, and thereby aid intellectual equality? Was it respect or insolence which made him spare our kings? In a moment of forgetfulness he raised his scythe once over the king of Spain, but he recalled himself betimes and let him live.[2] Not a single king died in that year. *Les dieux s'en vont*—but we keep the kings.

---

[1] "Boy," said a Western senator to an urchin, "do you know who I am?" "Yes, sir," replied the boy; "you are the great senator from Illinois." "True," replied the dignitary, "but remember that, great as I am, there is ONE still greater." As Goethe thought very little of the One, and as he was overwhelmed with such inordinate flatteries as this of Heine, it is not remarkable that there should have played about his mouth an expression of egoism.—*Translator.*

[2] This sentence is omitted in the French version.

Digitized by Google

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.[1]

In accordance with the conscientiousness to which I have strictly adhered, I must mention that many French persons have complained that I

[1] It is as well to forewarn the reader that all which Heine has written in this book in reference to the brothers Schegel, and especially August Wilhelm, must be taken with every allowance of distrust. Heine wished to appear as the first person who had made Germany known to France or the world; therefore he did all he could to discredit the work of Madame de Staël, of which Schlegel had been, so to speak, the engineer. But what was bitterest to Heine was the aristocratic position, the worldly success, the elegance of the Schlegels, matters which, as we see through all his works, were far dearer to him than to most men of letters: and believing himself to be intellectually their superior, it aroused all the envy of his nature to think of them. As it was patent to the world that the Schlegels had rendered immense service to scholarship and literature in many ways—services which could by no possibility be belittled or denied without injury to the critic—our author, not very willingly, admits them as if it were very generous to do so; but, on the other hand, he rakes up all the petty, personal, chamber-maid gossip which he can think of relative to August W. von

Digitized by Google

spoke too severely of the Schlegels, especially of August Wilhelm. But I do not think that such reproaches would have been uttered if the literary history of Germany were better known here. Many people are only familiar with the name as they find it in the works of Madame de Staël, his noble protectress. But the greater portion know nothing of him but the name, which rings in their memories as something honourable, or venerable, or admirable, like that of Osiris, of whom all that we can say is, that he was a queer old fellow of a god who was worshipped in Egypt.[1] What other likeness there may be between August Wilhelm Schlegel and Osiris is best known to them.[2]

Schlegel, as if this were a complete negative to his rank as scholar. Fortunately for Heine, his own enemies have not treated him in this manner. His reproach of "Lucinda" for indecency, when compared to much of his own "free-flying," is a miracle of audacity. And it may be said truly that Heine, in the hands of a Heine, treated as he treated the Schlegels, Cousin, and others whom he envied, might have been made to appear to many to be the most worthless, abject, or contemptible figure in German literature. Yet for those who can make these allowances, this chapter will still remain an admirable contribution to literature; and, apart from its unfairness, brilliant, ingenious, and erudite.—*Translator.*

[1] "Wovon sie nur wissen das es ein wunderlicher Kauz von Gott ist." *Kauz*, as an odd fellow and a screech-owl, may be very accurately though vulgarly rendered as "a rum old boy." Among American slangists, "one of the owls" has all the expressiveness of the German word.—*Translator.*

[2] The following passage is omitted in the German version, and it would have been more to Heine's credit if it had been

Digitized by Google

As I was once one of the university pupils of the elder Schlegel, it is possible that some clemency was due from me to him. But did August Wilhelm Schlegel spare his literary father, old Bürger? No! and in this he acted according to custom and descent; for in literature, as in the forests of the North American Indians, the fathers are killed by the sons when they become old and weak.

I have already remarked that Friedrich Schlegel was of more importance than August Wilhelm, and in fact the latter only lived upon the ideas of his brother, and knew no art save that of working them up.[1] Friedrich Schlegel was a

spared from the French. After speaking of Osiris and Schlegel, he remarks that "the French know as much of the one as of the other, and little suspect the great resemblance which there is between them," adding: "Bien qu'il existe aujourd'hui un grand nombre d'ecrivains allemands qui meritent bien plus que les Schlegels une mention étendue, je me vois obligé de consacrer encore quelques lignes à ces derniers pour repondre au reproche de duréte qui m'a été adressé. Malheureusement, ces nouvelles réflexions ne ressemblerent plus à un panégyrique."—*Translator.*

[1] "Und Verstand *nur* die Kunst sie auszuarbeiten." In the French version, "qu'il s'entendait à élaborer artistement." Here the insult in German is turned to a compliment in French. But these petty differences of only a few words in the French work are too numerous to notice. That August Wilhelm von Schlegel "only lived upon the ideas of his brother" is a reckless slander, as will appear plainly enough from Heine's own admission in several places of the different directions of the two brothers.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

profound thinker; he knew the glories of the past ages and felt the pains of the present, but he did not understand the sanctity of these sorrows, and that they were needed for the future well-being of the world. He saw the sun set, and gazed sadly at the place where it had vanished, and wailed over the darkness as it drew over the heaven, and never noticed that Aurora was dawning on the other side. Friedrich Schlegel once called the investigator into history "a prophet reversed." This remark perfectly characterises himself. He hated the present, he was terrified by the future, and it was only into the beloved past that the revealing glances of the seer penetrated.

In the agonies of our age poor Friedrich Schlegel did not see the pangs of a new birth, but only the agony of death; he had no idea why the curtain of the temple was rent in twain, and the earth did quake, and the rocks shivered, and in deadly fear he fled into the trembling ruins of the Roman Church. This was certainly the fittest refuge for one in his state of mind.[1] He had during his life indulged in much gaiety and pride, now he regarded it all as sinfulness, deserving the long-delayed penitence; therefore

[1] French version, "l'auteur de Lucinda trouva ce lieu approprié à la disposition de son âme."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

the author of "Lucinda" must necessarily become Catholic.

Lucinda is a novel, and, with the exception of his poems and a drama entitled "Alarcos," which is imitated from the Spanish, that novel is the only original composition which Friedrich Schlegel left. There was in his time no lack of admirers of this romance. The now highly honourable and reverend Schleiermacher once published enthusiastic letters on it. There were even critics who extolled it as a master-piece, and who absolutely prophesied that it would be regarded as the best book in German literature. They should have been imprisoned by the authorities, as prophets in Russia who foretell great public disasters are confined in jail till their predictions are fulfilled. No; the gods have preserved our literature from such a misfortune; the romance of Schlegel was soon rejected on account of its indecent worthlessness, and it is now forgotten. Lucinda is the name of its heroine, and she is a sensually witty woman, or rather a mixture of sensuality and wit. Her fault is that she is not a woman, but a dull unedifying compound of the two abstractions. The Holy Virgin may forgive him for having written this book, but the Muses never.

A similar novel, called "Florentin," has been wrongly attributed to the late Schlegel. This book, people say, was written by his wife, a

Digitized by Google

daughter of the celebrated Moses Mendelssohn, whom he had abducted from her first husband, and who went over with him to the Roman Catholic Church.

I believe that Friedrich Schlegel was sincere in his Catholicism, but I do not believe it of many of his friends. Here, however, it is very difficult to get at the truth. Religion and hypocrisy are twin sisters, and are so much alike that they often cannot be distinguished from one another. They have the same form, dress, and language. Only that the latter sister drawls a little more, and repeats oftener the word "love." I speak of Germany. In France one of the sisters is dead, and we see the other still in deepest mourning.

Since the appearance of the work *De l'Allemagne* by Madame de Staël, Friedrich Schlegel has presented the public with two great works, which are perhaps his best, and which merit at all events the most favourable mention.[1] These are his *Weisheit und Sprache der Indier*—"Wisdom

[1] Heine did not previously include these in his very brief summary of all that was "original" by Schlegel. The "Lectures on the Philosophy of History" form, in the highest and best sense of the word, an original work, nor is the "Wisdom and Language of the Indians," inferior to it. According to Heine's use of the word, limiting it to works of the imagination, there is nothing *original* in most of his own writings, any more than in those of Carlyle or Darwin.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

and Language of the Indians"—and his *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Literatur*—"Lectures on the History of Literature." By this first work he not only introduced the study of the Sanskrit into Germany, but really founded it. He became for our country what Sir William Jones had been for England. He had learned Sanskrit in the most genial manner,[1] and the few fragments which he has given in the "Wisdom" are admirably translated. By his profound perceptive faculty he grasped all the meaning of the epic metre, the *sloka*, which flows as widely in their poetry as that divinely clear flood the Ganges. How petty and poor in comparison appears August Wilhelm Schlegel, who translated some fragments from the Sanskrit into hexameters, and could not while so doing boast sufficiently that he had not let any trochees slip in, and had so neatly cut and copied so many material art-bits of the Alexandrines.[2] As Friedrich Schlegel's work on India is certainly translated into French, I can spare further praise. What I have to blame is the *arrière pensée* or hidden meaning of the book. It is written in

[1] "In der genialsten Weise," French version, "de la manière la plus originale."—*Translator.*

[2] A double allusion to Alexandrine work and the measure. This passage in reference to A. W. Schlegel is omitted in the French version, as it might very well have been from the German.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

the interests of Catholicism. These Schlegels had found not only its mysteries, but also the whole Catholic hierarchy and its battle with the secular power in the Indian poems.[1] In the Mahabarata and in the Ramayana they also discovered an elephantine Middle Age. In fact, when in the last epos King Wiswamitra quarrels with the priest Wasischta, the same interests are at stake as when the son of Barbarossa strove with Pope Hildebrand, though the cause of difference is here called in Europe the investiture, and there in India the cow Sabala.

The same fault may be found as regards Schlegel's "Lectures on Literature." Friedrich Schlegel here regards all literature from one elevated point of view, and this is always the bell-tower of a Catholic church.[2] And in all the author says we hear the bells ringing and the croaking of the ravens of the tower as they fly about. I seem to scent the incense of the high

[1] A discovery for which, strange as it may seem, the Catholics have been far from being grateful or gratified; Cardinal Newman having been one of the many to earnestly deny that these remarkable resemblances existed, or that they originated in India.—*Translator.*

[2] French version, "d'une église gothique." It is remarkable that this association of bells with monotony, repetition, and annoyance is found through the Middle Ages (*vide* an article in *The Author*, 1890), and received its fullest development in the famous chestnut-bell of America.

Digitized by Google

mass when I read in this book and see tonsured thoughts peeping out from its most beautiful passages. Despite these defects, I know of no better book of the kind; it is only by considering all the works of Herder that one can get a better general view of the literature of all countries; for Herder did not sit like a literary grand inquisitor in judgment over the nations, condemning or absolving them according to the measure of their faith. No; Herder regarded all mankind as a great harp in the hands of the Great Master; every race seemed to him to be a properly tuned string of this giant instrument, and he understood the universal harmony of its varied chords.

Friedrich Schlegel died in the summer of 1829, in consequence, it is said, of excess in eating.[1] He was fifty-seven years of age. His death caused a very repulsive literary scandal. His friends of the priestly party, whose head-quarters were in Munich, were enraged at the manner in which the Liberal press commented on his death, and they vilified, cursed, and calumniated the German Liberals. Yet it could not be said of any one of them "that he had run away with the wife of his host, and afterwards lived on the alms of the injured husband!"

I must now, since it is required of me, speak of

[1] These petty scandals, based on "wie man sagt" or "it is said," sufficiently indicate the real feeling of Heine towards the Schlegels, and his unfitness to criticise them fairly.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

the elder brother, August Wilhelm von Schlegel. Should I do so in Germany, they would stare at me in amazement.

Who talks about the giraffe now in Paris?

Wilhelm August Schlegel was born in Hanover, September 5, 1767. I do not know this from himself personally. I was never so impolite as to ask him his age. I found that date, if I am not mistaken, in Spindler's "Lexicon of Learned German Women." August Wilhelm von Schlegel is, therefore, sixty-four years of age. Alexander von Humboldt and other investigators into natural history declare that he is older. Champollion was also of this opinion. To describe his literary merits, I must again praise him as a translator. As such he has done work which is really extraordinary. His translation of Shakespeare into German is masterly and unsurpassable. August Wilhelm Schlegel is, with the exception perhaps of Gries and Count Platen, the greatest master of metre in Germany. In all other capacities or works he is entitled to only a second or third place. In æsthetic criticism he lacks the basis of a philosophy, and in this branch he is far surpassed by other critics, such as Solger. In old German studies Jacob Grimm towers far above him—Grimm, whose German grammar freed us from the superficiality with which old German monuments of our language were once explained by the Schlegels. Schlegel could perhaps have

Digitized by Google

gone far in the study of old German had he not thrown himself into Sanskrit; but old German had gone out of fashion, and with Sanskrit there might be a new sensation. But even in this study he remained to a degree an amateur; he owed the beginning of his ideas to his brother Friedrich, and what is scientific and real in his Sans-critical contributions he owes, as every one knows, to his learned collaborator, Lassen. Franz Bopp of Berlin is, in Germany, the true Sanskritic scholar, and the first in his specialty. He once wished to bring himself into notice by attacking the fame of Niebuhr, but when he is compared to this great investigator, or to a Johannes von Müller, a Heeren, a Schlosser, and similar historians, we can only shrug our shoulders. But what are his merits as a poet? This is hard to decide.

The violin-player Solomons, who gave instruction in his art to King George IV. of England, said once to his august pupil, "Players on the violin are divided into three classes; to the first belong those who cannot play at all; to the second, those who play very badly; and to the third, those who play well. Your Majesty has got so far as the second class."

Does August Wilhelm Schlegel belong to the first or second class? Some declare that he is no poet; others, that he is a very bad one. So far as I know, he is no Paganini.

Digitized by Google

August Wilhelm von Schlegel gained his celebrity chiefly by the unparalleled audacity or impudence, with which he assailed preceding literary authorities.[1] He tore the laurels from the old wigs, and thereby set flying much dust into the eyes of the public.[2] His fame is a natural daughter of scandal.

As I have several times observed, the criticism with which Schlegel attacked the literary authorities of his time is by no means based on any philosophy. When we have recovered from the amazement into which his audacity has thrown us, we perceive the utter and entire emptiness of the so-called Schlegelian criticism. For example, when he wishes to depreciate the poet Bürger, he compares his songs with the old English ballads which Percy collected, and shows that the latter were more naïve, more in the ancient spirit, and consequently more poetically conceived. Schlegel had fairly well appreciated the spirit of the past,

[1] This accusation is an exceedingly ingenious device to turn attention from the fact that Heine himself is here treating Schlegel in precisely the same manner as that of which he accuses the latter—that is, by means of "scandal" and mere abuse. At present, we have but few critics left who speak of the manner of writing of an opponent, *à la* Heine, as "rigmarole," and who abuse books without honestly explaining what is in them.—*Translator.*

[2] This expression is given in full only in the French version, "Il fit voler beaucoup de poudre *aux yeux de son publique.*"

Digitized by Google

especially of the Middle Age, and he therefore succeeded in pointing out this spirit in its works of art, and in demonstrating their beauties from this historical point of view. But he understood nothing of the present time; at best, he only caught something of the physiognomy or a few external traits of our time, and these were by far not the best or most beautiful; and as he did not comprehend the spirit which inspired them, so he saw in all our modern life only a prosaic absurdity. On the whole, only a great poet can seize the full meaning of the poetry of his own time; that of the past reveals itself much more readily, and it is easier to impart to others.[1] Therefore Schlegel succeeded in exalting in great numbers, poems in which the past lies coffined, at the expense of those in which our modern present breathes and lives. But death is not more poetic than life.[2] The relics of ancient poetry collected by Percy set forth the spirit of their own time, and Bürger's that of ours. Schlegel did not understand this spirit, else he would have heard in the vehemence with which it sometimes breaks out in Bürger's poems, not the rude cry of an untrained

---

[1] A great truth well expressed, but it should be remembered that, as Heine has shown, the spirit of the present in Schlegel's time consisted of revivals of the past.—*Translator.*

[2] This line is wanting in the French version.

Digitized by Google

tutor,[1] but rather the powerful cry of pain of a Titan who was goaded to death by an aristocracy of Hanoverian nobles and school pedants. Such was the case with the author of "Lenore," as well as that of many other men of genius, who as poor petty professors starved in Göttingen, lived wretchedly, and died in misery. How could the aristocratic chevalier, August Wilhelm von Schlegel, protected by aristocratic patrons, appointed, revived, baronised, and ribboned, understand those verses in which Bürger cried aloud, that an honourable man, sooner than beg favours from the great, should die of hunger?

The name Bürger means in German *citoyen*—citizen—a man of the middle class.

The fame of Schlegel was greatly increased by the attention which he attracted when he, somewhat later here in France, attacked the literary authorities of the French. We saw with joy and pride how our fellow-countryman, yearning for the prey, showed the French that all their classic literature was naught, that Molière was a buffoon and not a poet, that Racine was equally worthless, and that, on the other hand, we Germans must be regarded as the kings of Parnassus. His refrain ever was that the French were the most prosaic people in the world, and that there was no poetry

[1] **Magister, a mere Master of Arts, an ordinary teacher.**

Digitized by Google

in France. The man said this at a time when he had passing before his very eyes and in the body, so many chiefs of the Convention of that great titanic tragedy; at a time when Napoleon improvised a good epic every day,[1] when Paris swarmed with gods, heroes, and kings. But Schlegel saw nothing of all this; while he was here he was contemplating himself continually in a mirror, for which reason it is easy to understand why he saw no poetry in France.

But Schlegel, as I have said, never understood any poetry save that of the past; the present escaped him. Everything in modern life seemed to him prosaic, and that of France, the maternal soil of modern life, was out of his sphere of vision. Racine was accordingly the first whom he could not comprehend; for this great poet appears as herald of the modern age, with the great king with whom it begins. Racine was the first modern poet, as Louis XIV. was the first modern king. In Corneille there is still the inspiration of the Middle Age. In him and in the Fronde we still hear the death-rattle of ancient chivalry; therefore he is often called Romantic. But in Racine the mediæval manner of thinking is utterly extinguished; new feelings awake in him; he is

[1] In the French version, "improvisait chaque jour une sublime épopée."

Digitized by Google

the organ of a new society; in his breast the first violet of our modern life breathes its perfume; we see therein the first buds of the laurels which bloomed so fully in the later age. Who knows how many deeds grew from the tender verses of Racine? The French heroes who now lie buried by the Pyramids, by Moscow and Waterloo, had all heard Racine's poems of Racine, as their Emperor had done, from Talma. Who knows how many hundredweights of fame in the column of the Place Vendôme belong by right to Racine? Is Euripides a greater poet than Racine? Truly I do not know; but this I know, that the latter was a living fountain of love and a sense of honour, and that with his draughts he intoxicated, enraptured, and inspired an entire race. What more could you ask from a poet? We are all mortal; we go down into the grave and leave behind us our word, and when this has fulfilled its mission, it returns to God, the meeting-place of all poets' words, the home of all harmonies.

If Schlegel had confined himself to saying that the mission of the word of Racine was completed, and that the advanced age needed new poets, his attacks would not have been baseless. But baseless they were when he sought to show the weakness of Racine by comparing his works with those of older poets. Not only was he blind to the infinite grace and charm, the delightful gaiety,

Digitized by Google

the deep fascination which was in them, or to the truth that Racine costumed his new French heroes with antique garments, combining the interest of modern passion with the deeper interest of a brilliant masquerade. No; Schlegel was stupid enough to take the masking for reality, to judge of the Greeks of Versailles by those of Athens, and to compare the *Phædra* of Racine with the *Phædra* of Euripides! This habit of measuring the present with the meter of the past was so deeply rooted in Schlegel, that he always lashed the back of a later poet with the laurels of one of olden time; so that when he in turn would degrade Euripides, he could do no better than to compare him with the more ancient Sophocles or Æschylus.

It would take me too far to show how Schlegel wrought great mischief by attempting in this manner to depreciate Euripides, as did once Aristophanes. The latter was in this respect on a point of view which had much in common with that of the Romantic school; there are similar feelings and tendencies in his warfare, and if Tieck has been called a Romantic Aristophanes, so we may rightly call the parodist of Euripides and Socrates a Classic Tieck. For as Tieck and the Schlegels, despite their own unbelief, bewailed the decay of Catholicism, as they desired to restore this faith among the

Digitized by Google

multitude, as they with these views made war with scorn and slander on the Protestant Rationalists, the enlightened ones, and on the true rather than the false; as they cherished the grimmest antipathy for men who required an honest citizen-like equality in literature; as they ridiculed this spirit of equality as a Philistine-like petty vexation, and, on the other hand, exalted and extolled the great chivalric life of the feudal Middle Age; so also Aristophanes, who mocked the gods themselves, still hated the philosophers who prepared the road to ruin for all Olympus. So too he hated the rationalistic Socrates, who preached a higher morality; he hated the poets, who had likewise begun to announce a more modern life, which differed from the earlier period of Greek gods and heroes and kings just as our own age differs from that of feudal times; and finally he hated Euripides, who was no longer intoxicated, as Æschylus and Sophocles had been, with the Greek Middle Age, but had begun to approach the tragedy of middle-class life. I doubt whether Schlegel himself knew the real motives which inspired him to so decry and degrade Euripides in comparison with Æschylus and Sophocles. I believe that he was guided by an unconscious instinct to scent in the old tragedian that modern democratic and Protestant element which was already so deeply

Digitized by Google

hated by the chivalric and Olympic Catholic Aristophanes.[1]

Yet it may be that I do August Wilhelm Schlegel an undeserved honour in attributing to him any decided sympathies and antipathies. It is possible that he had none. In his youth he was a Hellenist, and later a Romanticist. He became the choir-leader of the new school; it was named after him and his brother; and of all who were in the school, he perhaps was the one who was least in earnest as regarded it. He upheld it with his talents, he studied himself into it, he enjoyed it while it was a success, and when it came to a bad end he worked himself into new literary pursuits.

But though the school came to grief, the efforts of August Wilhelm Schlegel bore good fruit for our literature; for he showed how scientific or learned subjects can be treated in elegant language. Before his time few German authors dared to write a learned book in a clear and attractive style.[2] They wrote a confused dry

[1] It is amusing, in reading this, to recall the fact that Heine himself is now so generally known as the modern Aristophanes. Their political motives may have differed, but their method of dealing with characters was identical.—*Translator.*

[2] If Heine reached the acme of unjust sarcasm in the previous sentence by denying to August Wilhelm Schlegel any sincerity, he atones for it in this admission that he improved German literary style. As he well might, for it was in a very great measure the influence of Schlegel which led him to write

Digitized by Google

German, which smelt of tallow-candles and tobacco. Schlegel himself was one of the few Germans who never smoked tobacco, a virtue which he owed to the society of Madame de Staël; and he owed, in fact, to this lady that external polish which he turned to such good account in Germany. In this respect the death of the admirable Madame de Staël was a great loss for this German *savant*, who found in her salon so many opportunities to become familiar with the latest fashions, and who, as her companion in all the chief cities of Europe, could see the world and acquire the most elegant manners. Such refining influences had become such a delightful necessity to him, that after the death of his noble protectress he was not disinclined to offer to accompany the celebrated Catalani in her travels.

As I have said, the promotion of elegance is the principal merit of Schlegel, and thanks to him there came more civilisation into the lives of German poets.[1] Goethe had already given the most influential example that a man could be a

German clearly, concisely, and brilliantly, as no one had ever done before him. There is an allusion to "tallow-candles" in the next sentence, which was probably suggested by remembering what he has elsewhere told us, that Schlegel had at his lectures *wax* tapers, which were snuffed by a servant in elegant livery.

[1] In the French version, "grâce à lui, il se glissa un peu de civilisation dans la vie des poëtes de l'Allemagne."

Digitized by Google

German poet and yet show something of external decency. In earlier times German poets despised all conventional forms, and the very name, or even that of "poetic genius," awoke most disagreeable associations. A German poet was a man who wore a shabby ragged coat, who wrote christening and wedding odes for a thaler a piece, who, instead of good society, enjoyed far more good liquor, and often lay of nights drunk in the gutter, tenderly kissed by Luna's gentle rays. When such men grew old, they generally plunged still deeper into misery. True it was a misery without much affliction or care, since all they cared for was to know where they could get the most schnapps for the least money.

Like this I had always conceived a German poet. How delighted and astonished was I when, as a youth, I studied at the University of Bonn, and there had the honour to see face to face August Wilhelm Schlegel, the poetic genius. He was, with the exception of Napoleon, the first great man whom I had ever beheld, and I shall never forget the sublime sight. To this very day I feel the holy shuddering awe which crept over my soul when I stood before his chair and heard him speak. In those days I wore a coarse white cut-a-way coat,[1] a scarlet cap, long blonde locks,

[1] *Flauschrock*, a short coat once peculiar to German students; also *Flaus*, a thick shaggy coat.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

and no gloves. But Herr August Wilhelm Schlegel had *gants glacés*, fine kid-gloves, and was dressed in the last Paris fashion; perfectly perfumed with good society and *eau de mille fleurs*, he was neatness and refinement itself, and when he spoke of "the Lord Chancellor of England," he added "my friend," while by him stood a lackey in the most baronial livery of the house of Schlegel, who snuffed the tapers in the silver candelabras, while on the desk before the marvellous man was a glass of *eau sucré*. Wax tapers! silver candelabras! servants in livery! my friend the Lord Chancellor of England! kid gloves! *eau sucré!*—what unheard of things in the lecture-room of a German professor! This splendour dazzled us young folks not a little—me especially—and I composed three odes to Herr Schlegel all beginning with—

"O thou, thou—who"—

and so on—*et cetera*. But it was only in poetry that I dared to *thou* so distinguished a man.[1] His external appearance was really imposing. On his small head shone a few silver hairs, and his form was so slender, so wasted and transparent, that he seemed to be all soul and almost a symbol of spiritualism.

However, he had married, and though the chief

[1] *Dutzen*; French, *tutoyer*.

Digitized by Google

of the Romanticists, had wedded the daughter of the church councillor, Paulus of Heidelberg, the leader of the German Rationalists. It was a symbolical espousal; Romanticism indeed allied itself to Rationalism, but the union was barren.[1] On the contrary, the separation between Romance and Rationalism became all the greater, and the very next morning after the nuptials Rationalism returned to its home, and would have nothing more to do with Romance; for Rationalism being always reasonable, did not wish to be merely symbolically married, and as soon as it recognised the wooden nothingness of Romantic art, ran away. I know that I here speak enigmatically, and will try to explain myself as clearly as possible. Typhon, the Evil, hated Osiris, (who, as you know, is an Egyptian god), and when he had him in his power, tore him to pieces. Isis, the poor wife of Osiris, sought with pain and fatigue the fragments, and succeeded in putting them together again. But one important part was wanting, and this was replaced with a substitute of wood. But alas! poor Isis; wood is only wood. Hence arose

[1] When I was a student in Heidelberg, 1846–7, I lived for six months next door to Paulus, who was then ninety-four years of age. He remained in a comatose condition every day until about noon, when he became intelligent and lively, and conversed well, and then relapsed into drowsiness. The winter of his age had arctic days.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

in Egypt a scandalous myth, and in Heidelberg a mysterious scandal.[1]

From that time August Wilhelm Schlegel passed quite out of sight. He had vanished. Discontent at being so forgotten drove him, after long years of absence, again to Berlin, once the capital of his literary renown, and there he delivered some public lectures on æsthetics. But he had meanwhile learned nothing new, and he now addressed a public which had gained from Hegel a philosophy of art and a science of æsthetics. His hearers jested and shrugged their shoulders. It was with him as with some old actor, who, after twenty years of retirement, visits the scene of his early success, and does not understand why the public laugh instead of applauding. The man had changed terribly, and he delighted Berlin for four full weeks by the display of his absurdities. He had become an old coxcomb, who made of himself everywhere a fool of which the most incredible things are narrated.

---

[1] "A mythical scandal" would perhaps come nearer to the truth of a story which is most discreditable to Heine. French version, "De là vint une grande culte en Egypte et à Heidelberg un grand scandale. C'est un vieux mythe qui, dans son temps, a produit une joyeuse sensation." And even more discreditable is the manner in which he mercilessly drags to light and publishes the details of the old age of one who had done great work in his day, and to whom he owed at least the gratitude due to all early teachers.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

I had the sorrow to see August Wilhelm Schlegel again in person here in Paris. I truly had no idea of this change till I was convinced by my own eyes. It was little more than a year ago, just before my arrival in the capital. I was going to see the house in which Molière had dwelt, for I honour great poets, and seek everywhere for traces of their earthly career: it is a *cultus*—a religion. On my way, not far from that sacred dwelling, I saw a being in whose played-out and worn-away[1] features I saw some likeness to the former August Wilhelm Schlegel. I thought I saw his spirit, but it was only his body. The soul is long dead, and his body ghosts about and haunts the earth, and has meantime grown plump; flesh had attached itself to those slender spiritual legs; there was even a stomach visible, over which hung a number of ribbons of orders. The little head, once so grey, now bore a golden yellow wig. He was clad in the latest fashion of the year in which Madame de Staël died (1818); and he smiled in a manner so sweetly superannuated, like an old lady with a piece of sugar in her mouth, and moved as youthfully as a coquettish child. A strange rejuvenation had actually come over him, as if he had got into a comic second edition of his

[1] *Verwebten Zügen.*

Digitized by Google

youth; he seemed to be in full bloom once more, and I even suspected that the red of his cheeks was not due to rouge, but to a healthy irony of Nature.

At that instant it seemed to me as if I saw the late Molière[1] standing at the window, and as if he smiled down at me, indicating the melancholy dull apparition. All that was ridiculous in it flashed upon me all at once. I understood all the depth and fulness of the joke in it; I comprehended the farcical character of that fabulously ridiculous man, who—more's the pity!—has never found any great comedian to put him properly upon the stage. Molière himself was the man who could work up such a figure for the Théâtre Français; he only had the talent needed; and that August Wilhelm von Schlegel felt, and so hated Molière for the same reason which made Napoleon hate Tacitus; for as he, the French Cæsar, well knew that the Republican writer of history would not have painted him with rosy hues, so August Wilhelm Schlegel, the German Osiris, had long felt that he would never have escaped Molière, the great comic writer, had the latter lived. Napoleon said of Tacitus that he was the slanderer of Tiberius, and August Wilhelm Schlegel said of Molière that he was no poet, but only a buffoon.

---

[1] French version, *Poquelin*.

Digitized by Google

August Wilhelm Schlegel soon after this left Paris, having received from His Majesty Louis Philippe I., King of the French, the decoration of the legion of honour. The *Moniteur* has to this day hesitated to properly announce this fact; but Thalia, the Muse of Comedy, hurriedly jotted it down in her notebook of jests.[1]

[1] The words "from His Majesty Louis Philippe I., King of the French," are judiciously omitted from the French version. Heine was at this time working for a pension from His Majesty, and doing all in his power to please his French public, which partially accounts for the bitterness of his remarks on Schlegel, whom he puts forth as the foe of France.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

AFTER the Schlegels, Ludwig Tieck was the most effective author of the Romantic school. For it he fought, thought, and sang. He was a poet, a name which neither of the Schlegels deserved; for he was a true son of Phœbus Apollo, and, like his ever-youthful father, he bore not only the lyre but the bow, with a quiver full of rattling, ringing arrows. He was, like the Delphian god, intoxicated with lyrical fire and critical cruelty. And when, like him too, he had pitilessly flayed alive some literary Marsyas he merrily grasped with bloody fingers the golden chords of his lyre and sang a sweet song of love.

The poetical polemic which Tieck waged in dramatic form against the adversaries of the school belongs to the most remarkable curiosities of our literature. They are satirical plays, which are generally compared with the comedies of Aristophanes. Yet they differ from the latter almost as much as a tragedy by Sophocles differs from one by Shakespeare. If the ancient comedies

Digitized by Google

had the same cut and style,[1] the strictly drilled step, and the exquisitely metrical language of ancient tragedies, so that they might pass for parodies, so are the dramatic satires of Tieck cut in as original and strange a manner, just as Anglicanly irregular and as metrically capricious as the tragedies of Shakespeare. Was this form invented by Tieck? No; for it existed already among the people in Italy. He who understands Italian may get a tolerably correct idea[2] of the dramas of Tieck if he will dream himself into the chequered-bizarre, Venetian-fantastic fairy-tale comedies of Gozzi, mixed with a little German moonshine. In fact, Tieck took most of his masks from this merry child of the Lagunes. Following his example, many German poets have mastered the same form; hence we have had comedies whose comic effects were not produced by a single fanciful character or a gay intrigue, but where we are transported at once into a wild and merry world, where

---

[1] *Einheitlichen Zuschnitt*, as of the uniforms of soldiers. French version, *toute l'unité d'action*. In the same, the words *englisch unregelmässig*, which I render Anglicanly or Englishly-irregular, are not translated.—*Translator*.

[2] "Kann sich einen ziemlich richtigen Begriff verschaffen." In the French version, *une juste idée*, which implies a perfect intelligence. These differences, though trifling, indicate carelessness, and they often occur several times in a page.—*Translator*.

Digitized by Google

animals talk and act like men, and where chance and caprice take its place in the natural order of things. This we also find in Aristophanes. But the latter chose this form to reveal to us his profoundest views of the world,[1] as, for instance, in the "Birds," where the maddest efforts of mankind, their desire to build the grandest castles in the air, their defiance of the eternal gods, and the vain joy of their triumphs, are set forth in the most ludicrous caricatures. And it was that which made Aristophanes so great, because his views of the world were so great, because they were grander and more tragic than the tragedian himself, because his comedies were really jesting tragedies. Take, for example, his Paisteteros, who is not shown up in his ridiculous worthlessness at the end of the play, as a modern poet would have planned it. On the contrary, he woos and wins the beautiful, marvellously mighty Basilea; he soars with this heavenly bride to his city in the air; the gods are compelled to obey him, folly celebrates its marriage with power, and the play ends with joyous marriage-hymns. Can there be, for a reasonable man, anything more cruelly tragic than this victory and triumph of folly? Our German Aristophanes do not rise

[1] *Weltanschaungen.* French version, *ses vues sur la société. Welt* implies here rather the universe or all things.

Digitized by Google

so high; they refrain from such lofty views of life; they manifest the utmost modesty as regards discussing those very important relations of man, politics, and religion; they only venture on the theme which Aristophanes himself has treated in the "Frogs" as a subject of satire—the stage itself—and they have mocked with more or less cleverness its failings.

Still we must consider the politically enslaved condition of Germany. Our wits, restrained from ridiculing real princes, made up for it by attacking kings of the theatre and queens of the coulisses. We, who were almost destitute of political journals which discussed public affairs, were all the more blessed with countless æsthetic journals, containing nothing but idle tales and theatrical criticisms, so that any one who saw our newspapers might well suppose that the whole German race consisted of chattering nursery-maids and theatrical critics. And yet it would have been unjust. How little content we were with such miserable scribbling appeared immediately after the Revolution of July, when it seemed as if free and bold words might be uttered in our own dear native land. There sprung up all at once newspapers which criticised the good or bad acting of real kings, and many of them who had forgotten their parts were hissed in their own capitals. Our literary Scheherazades, who had hitherto put the public, that plump

Digitized by Google

Sultan, to sleep with their little tales, were now silent; the actors saw with amazement the pit empty, however divinely they played, and even the reserved seats of the terrible town-critics were very often vacant. Once the good heroes of the boards always complained that they were continually subjects of public conversation, and that even their domestic affairs were discussed in the journals. But what was their horror when the awful truth flashed upon them that nobody now cared what they did!

In fact, when the Revolution broke out in Germany,[1] there was an end of theatres and dramatic criticism, and the terrified feuilletonists, actors, and critics apprehended—and justly—that "Art was going to the dogs." But this great calamity was fortunately averted from our native land by the wisdom and power of the Frankfort Diet. There will be, let us hope, no revolution in Germany. We are protected from the guillotine and all the terrors of freedom of the press, even the Chamber of Deputies, whose competition so greatly injured the regularly licensed theatres, is done away with, and art is saved! Just now they are doing all they can for art, especially in Prussia. The museums gleam with all the splendours of colour,

[1] French version, "En effet, quand le soleil de juillet nous éclaira."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

the orchestras sound, the ballet-girls leap their loveliest and liveliest *entrechats*, and a thousand and one novels enrapture the public, and theatrical criticism blooms again.

Justinus relates in his "Histories," that when Cyrus had quieted the revolt of the Lydians, he succeeded in taming their stubborn, liberty-loving spirit by inducing in them an interest in the fine arts and other pleasant things. So there was nothing more heard of Lydian liberty or rebellion, but all the more famously did the Lydian restaurant-keepers, panders, and artists flourish.

Now there is in Germany rest and repose. Theatrical criticism and novels are to the fore, and as Tieck excels in both, all friends of art pay him the tribute due. He is, in fact, the best novelist in Germany. Yet all his works are not of equal worth or of the same kind. We can distinguish in him, as in painters, many manners. His first was altogether that of the old school. Then he wrote to order, and by command of a bookseller, who was no other than the late Nicolai himself, the most self-willed of champions of enlightenment and humanity, the greatest enemy of superstition, mysticism, and romance. Nicolai was an indifferent writer, a prosaic old wig, who often made himself ridiculous by scenting Jesuitism. But we, the later born, must admit that old Nicolai was a thoroughly honest man, who meant

Digitized by Google

well for the German race, and who in the holy cause of liberty did not dread that cruellest of all martyrdoms, ridicule. I was told in Berlin that Tieck once lived in Nicolai's house, one storey above the latter, and so the modern time walked over the head of the old.

The works which Tieck wrote in his first style, mostly tales and long novels, among which "William Lovell" is the best, are very insignificant and without poetry. It would seem as if the rich poetic nature of this man was frugal or stinted in his youth, and that he saved up all his spiritual wealth for a later time. Or was Tieck himself ignorant of the treasure which was in him, and were the Schlegels needed to discover it with their divining-rod? For as soon as he came into touch with them, all the riches of his imagination, his deep feeling and his wit, at once showed themselves. Diamonds gleamed, the purest pearls rolled out in streams, and over all flashed the ruby, the fabulous carbuncle gem of which romantic poets have often said and sung. This rich breast was the real treasury whence the Schlegels drew the funds for their literary campaigns. Tieck had to write for the school the satirical comedies which I have mentioned, and prepare according to the new æsthetic recipes many poems of every kind. This is his second style. His best productions in it are "The Emperor Octavian," "The Holy Genofeva,"

Digitized by Google

and "Fortunatus," three dramas which take their names from popular chapbooks. The poet has given to these old tales, which have ever been dear to the German world, new and costly clothing. Honestly speaking, I prefer them in their old naïve, true-hearted form. Beautiful as Tieck's "Genofeva" may be, I love far better the old *Volksbuch*, very badly printed at Cologne on the Rhine, with its rude woodcuts, in which it is touching to see the poor naked Countess Palatine, with only her long hair for chaste clothing, while her little Schmerzenreich is nursed at the teats of a pitying doe.[1]

Far more precious than those dramas are the novels which Tieck wrote in this, his second manner. These too are mostly taken from old popular legends. The best are "The Blonde Eckbert" and "The Runenberg." In these compositions[2] we feel a mysterious depth of meaning, a marvellous union with Nature, especially with the realm of plants and stones. The reader seems to be in an enchanted forest; he hears subterranean springs and streams rustling melodiously, and his

---

[1] In the French version the Pfalzgräfin is promoted to a *princesse*, while the name of Schmerzenreich, "full of sorrow," is omitted.—*Translator.*

[2] *In diesen Dichtungen*, carelessly rendered in the French version as *dans ses poésies*, in which we have two errors in three words.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

own name whispered by the trees. Broad-leaved clinging plants wind vexingly about his feet, wild and strange wonder-flowers look at him with varicoloured longing eyes, invisible lips kiss his cheeks with mocking tenderness, tall mushrooms like golden bells grow singing about the roots of trees, great silent birds cradle themselves on the boughs, and nod adown with their cunning[1] long bills. All breathes—lurks—is thrilling with expectation, when suddenly the soft tune of a hunter's horn is heard, and a beautiful lady with waving plumes on her cap, a falcon on her wrist, rides past on a white palfrey. And this fair dame is as bright and blonde and violet-eyed, as smiling and yet serene, as true and yet as ironic, as chaste and yet as passionate, as the imagination of our glorious Ludwig Tieck. Yes! his fantasie is a wondrous winsome damoiselle of high degree, who in an enchanted forest hunts fabulous creatures —perhaps the rare unicorn which can be caught only by a pure maid.

But now a strange change takes place in Tieck, which is shown in his third manner. Having been silent for a long time after the fall of the

[1] "Mit ihren klugen langen Schnäbeln." I translate this by the American word "cunning," which is used in the same sense in Kent, implying, as in the German, that which is dainty, or *mignonne* with a shade of cleverness. The French version gives it as "leurs longs becs pensifs"!

Digitized by Google

Schlegels, he again appeared in public, and that in a manner which was little expected of him. The former enthusiast, who had once in visionary zeal thrown himself on the breast of the Roman Catholic Church, who had fought enlightenment and Protestantism with such power, who breathed nothing but feudality and the Middle Age, and who only loved art in naïve outpourings of the heart, now appeared as the foe of what was visionary, as a depicter of modern middle-class life, as an artist who required in art the clearest self-consciousness—in short, as a reasonable man. Thus has he shown himself in a series of recent novels, some of which are known in France. A deep study of Goethe is visible in them, and it is specially this Goetheism which characterises his third style. There is the same artistic clearness, cheerfulness, repose, and irony. As the school of the Schlegels did not succeed in drawing Goethe into it, now we see how it, represented by Tieck, went over to him. This reminds us of a Mahometan tale. The Prophet had said to the mountain, "Come to me!" but it did not; and lo! the great miracle was worked, for the Prophet went unto it!

Tieck was born in Berlin, the 31st May 1773. For many years he has lived in Dresden, where he is chiefly busied with the theatre, and he who in his earlier writings always ridiculed the

Digitized by Google

court-councillor as a type of the ridiculous, has himself been made such a Royal Saxon dignitary. God is sometimes a greater satirist than Tieck.

And now a strange misunderstanding has come between the reason and the imagination of this author. The former, or the reason of Tieck, is an honest, sober, plain citizen, who worships practical economy and abhors the visionary. The other, that is, the Tieck imagination, is still, as of yore, the chevalresque lady with the flowing feather on her cap, the falcon on her fist. The pair lead a curious wedded life, and it is often sad to see how the poor dame of high nobility must help the sober citizen spouse in his household or in his cheese-shop. But often in the night, when the good man, with his cotton night-cap on, snores peacefully, the noble lady rises from the matrimonial bed of durance vile, and mounts her white horse and hunts away as merrily as of yore into the enchanted forest of romance.

But I cannot refrain from remarking that of late the Tieckian reason in romance has become sterner than ever, and that at the same time his imagination pays penance more and more for her romantic nature, so that when the nights are cold she lies comfortably yawning in the marriage-bed, and hugs up to her meagre husband almost lovingly.

Digitized by Google

And yet Tieck is always a great poet, for he can create living forms, and words burst from his heart which move our own. But a faint-heartedness, something undecided and uncertain, or a certain feeble-mindedness, is, and ever was, to be observed in him. This want of decision is only too perceptible in all that he did or wrote. Certainly there is no independent character in his works. His first manner shows him as a mere nothing, his second as a true and trusty squire of the Schlegels, his third as an imitator of Goethe. His theatrical criticisms, which he published under the title of "Dramaturgic Pages," constitute his most original work; but they are theatrical criticisms.

In order to represent Hamlet as an altogether weak-minded man, Shakespeare makes him, in his conversation with the comedians, appear as an admirable theatrical critic.[1]

---

[1] Of which it may be well said that it is a very weak-minded remark, "manufactured to point." Hamlet is not weak; he is crushed by the force of circumstance, and resists to the last with strange reflective philosophy, but without the howling and "acting" which are in certain minds—*e.g.* Carlyle's and Heine's—inseparable from "heroism," and even from strength of mind. The problem which Shakespeare proposed to set forth in Hamlet was this apparent paradox, which was, however, far beyond Heine's comprehension. Shakespeare's object in making Hamlet give wise counsel to the players was the very reverse of what Heine declares it to have been, for it indicates very great strength of character and culture that a man under such terrible suffering could control himself so as to converse as

Digitized by Google

Tieck never troubled himself with serious studies; his work of this kind was limited to modern languages and the older documents of German poetry. As a true Romanticist he was always a stranger to classic studies; nor did he ever busy himself with philosophy, which seems to have been altogether repugnant to him. From the fields of philosophy Tieck gathered only flowers and switches —the first for the noses of his friends, and the latter for the backs of his foes. With serious culture or scientific agriculture he had naught to do. His writings are bouquets and bundles of rods, but never a sheaf with ears of corn.[1]

Next to Goethe, Tieck chiefly imitated Cervantes. The humoristic irony, or, as I may say, the ironic humour, of these two modern poets spreads its perfume in the novels written in Tieck's third style. Irony and humour are therein so blended as to seem but one. There is much said now among us as to this humorous irony; the men of the Goethean school of art praise it as a special glory of their master, and it plays a great part in German literature. But it is only a sign of

Hamlet does. Refined self-control is the acme of cultured strength. The idea that all life is a play and a dream inspires the whole of "Hamlet," and it was dear to Shakespeare himself, as many passages prove.—*Translator.*

[1] The moral of which is that all men should be farmers. But poets rather rank as gatherers of flowers or gardeners. Tieck is here hunted down because he had hunted with the Schlegels.

Digitized by Google

political servitude, and as Cervantes in the days of the Inquisition took refuge in humorous irony to set forth his thoughts without giving a chance to catch hold to the familiars of the Holy Office, so Goethe expressed with it that which he, as Minister of State and a courtier, could not directly utter. Goethe never suppressed truth, but where he could not show her naked, he clad her lightly in humour and irony. The honest Germans,[1] who pine under censorship and spiritual oppression of every kind, and yet never can suppress what the heart inspires, have specially taken to the ironic and humorous form. It was the only means of exit which was left to their nobler feelings, and in this form German honourableness is most touchingly shown. This again reminds me of the marvellous Prince of Denmark. Hamlet is the most honourable fellow who ever wore a skin. His dissimulation only serves as an offset to what oppresses from without; he is peculiar and odd because such conduct is less offensive to court etiquette than open breach of it. But in all his humorous ironical jests he lets it be distinctly perceived that he is *acting;* in all he does and says his real meaning is visible for all who can see, even to the king, to whom he cannot speak the plain truth (for that

[1] *Schriftsteller*, or writers, in the last German edition; *die ehrlichen Deutschen* in the first. French version, *les honnêtes allemands.—Translator.*

Digitized by Google

he is too weak), and yet from whom he will by no means hide it. Hamlet is through and through honourable; only the most honourable man could say, "We are arrant knaves all;" and while he plays the lunatic he will not deceive us, and is in his heart conscious that he is really mad.

I have still to praise two works by Tieck, for which he specially deserved the commendation of the German public. One of these is a translation of a series of English dramatists anterior to Shakespeare, and his version of "Don Quixote." Among the former are several which bear the same names and treat of the same subjects as the Shakespeare plays. We find in them the same intrigues and scenic development; in a word, all the Shakespearean tragedy except the poetry. Some commentators have expressed it as their opinion that these are the first sketches of the great poet, as it were his dramatic cartoons, and if I err not, Tieck himself has declared that "King John," one of these old plays, is a work by Shakespeare, or, so to speak, a prelude of the great masterpiece known to us by this name. But that is an error. These tragedies are nothing more than old plays on hand, which Shakespeare, as we know, worked over again, partly or wholly, as they were required by the managers, who paid him for such work from twelve to sixteen shillings each. And so a poor hack of an adapter of other

Digitized by Google

men's plays outweighs the proudest literary kings of our time.

The other great poet, Miguel de Cervantes, played as modest a part in the real world. These two men, the composer of "Hamlet" and that of "Don Quixote," are the greatest poets of modern times.[1]

The translation of "Don Quixote" is a special success. No one has so exquisitely hit off the insane dignity of the ingenious hidalgo of La Mancha, and set it forth so accurately, as our admirable Tieck.[2] The book reads almost like a German

[1] In the French version the following words are here added: "Mais Cervantes encore plus que le doux William, exerce sur moi un charme indéfinnisable. Je l'aime jusqu'aux larmes. Cet amour date de très-long temps." After this follows the sixteenth chapter from the *Reisebilder*, or "The City of Lucca," and the preface to the first volume, p. 36 (German edition of 1876). When we consider the remarkable amount of prefacing and comment by Heine as regards his care in compiling and editing this work, the extraordinarily careless manner in which it was pitchforked together seems like a mad joke. *Et plus ultra.* . . .

[2] The German editor (ed. 1876) here remarks:—

"I found in the earlier German editions the following passage, which I, according to the French edition, must place at the end of this section, in order to bring the previous supplement into its proper place:—

"'It is droll enough that the Romantic school has given us the best translation of a work in which its own folly is most amusingly ridiculed. For this school was bitten by the same madness which inspired the noble knight of La Mancha to all his follies; like him, it would fain restore mediæval chivalry, and call a perished past into the present. O did Miguel de

Digitized by Google

original, and forms next after "Hamlet" and "Faust" the favourite reading of Germans. The cause of this is, that in these two astonishing and profound works we have found, as in "Don Quixote," the tragedy of our own nothingness. German youth love "Hamlet" because they feel with him that "the time is out of joint." They sigh in the same way to think that they are called to set it right, feel also their own incredible weakness, and declaim, "To be or not to be." Men of mature age, on the contrary, prefer "Faust." Their mental condition attracts them to the bold investigator who makes a compact with the invisible world and who fears not the devil. But those who have seen that all is vain, and that all human efforts are useless, prefer the romance of Cervantes, for they see all inspiration satirised in it, and all of our knights of the present who fight and suffer for ideas appear to them as so many Don Quixotes.

Did Miguel de Cervantes suspect what application a later age would make of his work? Did he really parody idealistic inspiration in his tall lean knight, and common sense in his fat squire? Anyhow, the latter is always the most ridiculous, for plain common sense, with all its trite and everyday proverbs, must all the same trot along after

---

Cervantes Saavedra wish to ridicule other knights in his wild heroic poem, that is to say, all men who fight and suffer for an idea.'"—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

Inspiration on its easy-paced donkey; in despite of his clearer insight, he and his ass must suffer all discomfort, such as befalls the knight himself —yea, the ideal inspiration is of such powerfully attractive nature that common sense with the donkey must follow whether he will or not.

Or did this man of deep and subtle wit mean to mock mankind still more shrewdly? Did he allegorise the soul in the form of Don Quixote and the body in that of Sancho Panza? And is the whole poem a great mystery, in which the question of spirit and matter is discussed with terrible truthfulness? This much I see in the book, that the poor material Sancho must suffer much for the spiritual Don Quixote, that he gets for the noble views of his master the most ignoble stripes, and that he is always more sensible than his high-trotting master, for he knows that lashes and cuffs have evil taste, but the little sausages in an *olla podrida* a very good one. Indeed, the body often seems to have more insight than the soul, and man thinks frequently far better with his back and belly than with his head.

But if old Cervantes only meant to depict in "Don Quixote" the fools who wished to restore mediæval chivalry and call again to life a perished past, it is a merry irony of chance that it was just the Romantic school itself which gave us the best translation of a book in which its own folly is most delightfully satirised.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

AMONG the lunacies of the Romantic school in Germany must be specially mentioned the incessant upraising and praising of Jacob Böhme. This name was, so to speak, the shibboleth of such people. When they pronounced it they made their most deeply, spiritually-expressive faces. Was it in earnest or in jest?

This Jacob Böhme was a shoemaker, who first saw the light of day in the year 1575 at Görlitz, in the Oberlausitz, and who left behind him many theosophical writings. These being written in German, were consequently the more accessible to our Romanticists. Whether that wonderful shoemaker was so distinguished a philosopher as many German mystics declare, I really cannot accurately say, never having read him; but I am convinced that he did not make such good boots as M. Sakoski.[1] Shoemakers, by the

[1] Three sentences of the foregoing passage are wanting in the French version. These remarks as to Böhme, and the declaration by Heine that he had never read his works, are very flippant and discreditable. One need not be a mystic nor

Digitized by Google

way, play an important part in our literature; and Hans Sachs, a shoemaker, who was born in the year 1454 in Nuremberg, and who there passed his life, was praised by the Romantic school as one of our best poets. I have read him, and I must confess that I doubt whether M. Sakoski ever made such excellent verse as our old and admirable Hans Sachs.[1]

---

a theosophist to recognise in Böhme a grand genius struggling to find truth, and overcome the obstacles caused by want of education. The influence which he has had on many great minds in all countries, and in the development of several sects, and on the German language, deserves more important mention in a work which, its author declares, is far superior to any other as a clear and intelligible exposition of German literature, and especially of its philosophy and motives. He remarks that those who had read Böhme always made up their most serious grimaces when his name is mentioned. He might have added, with equal truth, that it is usual among those who know nothing about him to grin on such occasions and make small jokes, as may be seen from Butler to Byron, and so on to Heine himself. The Rev. Mr. Boardman, an American writer, derives Quakerism entirely from the influence of Böhme on George Fox: and the results of the style and manner of thought of the "inspired shoemaker of Görlitz" may be found "broad and deep" in German literature.—*Translator.*

[1] By comparing this sentence with what Heine says of Hans Sachs at the end of the first part, it will be very apparent that this perusal of the poems of the latter must have taken place subsequently to the earlier comment. It is probable that after the remarkable abuse of the shoemaker of Nuremberg had been published, some German remonstrated with Heine, and induced him to look over some works of Sachs. This is the only explanation which occurs for such a singular contradiction. It

Digitized by Google

I have already mentioned Schelling's influence on the Romantic school.[1] As I intend to speak of him in another place, I may here be spared from a detailed comment on him. In any case, he deserves our marked attention, for at an

may be observed that in the French version the compliment is limited to "notre vieux et laborieux Hans Sachs." But as Sachs is very popular in Germany, the German edition has "unser alter, *vortrefflicher* Hans Sachs." The *vrai esprit de Heine* is here "double distilled." The allusion to M. Sakoski here turns upon the resemblance of *Verse*, or verses, to *Ferse*—heels.

[1] The following is here given in the French version :—

"Il residait alors à Jéna, qui était le quartier général de l'école. M. J. Schelling, ce que le publique ignore, a aussi écrit des póesies sous le nom de Bonaventura ; entre autres, une pièce intitulée Les Dernières Paroles du pasteur de Drontheim. Cette pièce n'est pas mal ; elle est mystérieuse, sinistre et saissisant. C'est l'histoire d'un ministre protestante qui est enlevé a minuit de chez lui par des cavaliers masques ; il est conduit, les yeux bandés, dans une ville église, où on lui commande de donner la bénédiction nuptiale à deux jeunes gens qui sont agnouillés devant l'autel. La fiancée est d'une rare beauté mais triste et pâle comme la mort. Aussi à peine la cérémonie est elle finie que les cavaliers masqués lui tranchent la tête. Le pasteur est reconduit chez lui, après avoir prête serment de ne jamais dévoiler ce qu'il a vu ; aussi n'a-t-il divulgué ce secret qu'à son lit de mort. . . . J'ai déjà parlé de l'importance philosophique de M. Schelling ; j'ai montré sa splendeur d'autre fois, et j'avais, helas ! à rapporter aussi son état actuel, sa déplorable alliance avec le parti du passé, la déchéance de cette royauté philosophique."

From this point there are given in the German edition three and a half pages on Schelling, which are omitted from the French version—that is to say, all which I have translated, to the words "hatred and envy."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

earlier time he caused a great revolution in the German intellectual world; and in later times he changed so much, that the inexperienced fall into the greatest errors when they compare the earlier Schelling with the one of to-day. The former was a bold Protestant who protested against Fichtean Idealism. This Idealism was a strange system, which must be extremely foreign to a Frenchman. For while there rose in France a philosophy which embodied the spirit or recognised spirit as only a form of matter—in short, while Materialism here took the upper hand, there sprung up in Germany a philosophy which, to the contrary, explained all matter as a modification of spirit, and which even denied the existence of matter. It would seem as if the spirit sought beyond the Rhine revenge for the injuries which it had here endured. When men repudiated spirit in France, it emigrated at once to Germany, and there repudiated matter. Fichte may be regarded in this relation as the Duke of Brunswick of Spiritualism, and his ideal philosophy was nothing but a protest against French Materialism. But this philosophy, which really forms the highest pinnacle of Spiritualism, could not endure, any more than did the coarse Materialism of the French; and Schelling was the man who announced the doctrine that matter, or, as he

Digitized by Google

called it, Nature, might exist not only in our soul but in reality, and that our perception of things is identical with the things themselves. This is the Schelling doctrine of the identity, or, as it is also called, the philosophy of Nature (*Naturphilosophie*).

All of this took place in the beginning of this century. Schelling was then a great man. Meanwhile Hegel appeared on the philosophic stage, and Schelling, who in later times wrote almost nothing, was overshadowed; in fact, he lapsed into oblivion, or only retained a name in the history of literature. Hegel became sovereign in the realm of spirit, and poor Schelling, a decayed mediatised philosopher, wandered sadly about among the mediatised gentlemen of Munich. There I saw him once, and could have almost wept over the wretched sight. And what he uttered was utterly rubbishy and wretched, or the envious abuse of Hegel, who had supplanted him. As one shoemaker speaks of another whom he accuses of having stolen his leather and made shoes of them, so I heard Schelling, when I saw him by chance, speak of Hegel, who had taken "his ideas," and "They were my ideas which he took," and yet again "My ideas" was the running refrain of the poor man. Indeed, if the shoemaker Jacob Böhme once spoke like a philosopher, the philosopher Schelling now speaks like a shoemaker.

Digitized by Google

Nothing is more ridiculous than reclaiming property in stolen ideas. Hegel did indeed use very many of Schelling's in his philosophy, but the latter never knew what to do with them. He always philosophised, but could never make a philosophy. And again, it might be said that Schelling took more from Spinoza than Hegel took from him. Could Spinoza be freed from his stiff old Descartesian mathematical form and made more accessible to the public, it will perhaps come to light that he, above all others, has cause to complain of robbery of ideas. All of our modern philosophers, perhaps unconsciously, see through the glasses which Baruch [Benedict] Spinoza ground.[1]

Hatred and envy caused the fall of angels, and it is, alas! too true that anger at Hegel's ever-rising greatness drove poor Schelling to where we now see him, into the snares of the Catholic Propaganda,[2] whose headquarters is in Munich.

[1] In allusion to the fact that Spinoza gained his living by polishing optical glasses, spectacles, telescopes, &c., thereby enabling mankind to see further to heaven, and indeed around them here on earth, as well as to get clearer insight into books, as he also did by his writings. These last three paragraphs are condensed into five lines in the French version, of which version I have been told that it is the most perfect and admirable translation of any modern work.—*Translator.*

[2] "Dans les rets de cette triste propagande" (French version). Schelling was succeeded at Munich by Prof. Bechers, whose lectures on Schelling I attended. Schelling himself was then (1847) in Berlin.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

Schelling betrayed philosophy to the Catholic religion. All witnesses agree therein, and it was evident long before that it must come to this. I had often heard from the mouths of certain magnates in Munich, "We must combine faith with knowledge." This phrase was as innocent as a bed of flowers, and under it lurked a serpent. Now we know what ye would have! Schelling must now employ all his abilities to justify the Catholic religion,[1] and all that which he teaches as philosophy is nothing but a defence of Catholicism. At the same time it was speculated as an extra advantage that the celebrated name of Schelling would attract German youth thirsting for wisdom to Munich, and that they might be the more easily imposed on by Jesuitical lies in the garb of philosophy. And the youth knelt piously before the man whom they esteemed as the high-priest of truth, and without suspicion took from his hands the poisoned sacramental wafer.[2]

Among the pupils of Schelling Germany greatly

[1] The word Catholic is here again omitted from the French version, as it was in the last sentence save one; also in the next, where it appears as *la foi*. *Sic semper.* —*Translator.*

[2] It is most improbable that Schelling's teaching ever converted a single Protestant to Catholicism. On the other hand, it is unquestionable that familiarity with speculation in the New Philosophy created among German Catholics a spirit of independence which has troubled the Vatican of late far more than Protestantism.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

extols Steffens, who is now professor of philosophy in Berlin. He lived in Jena when the Schlegels were most busy there, and his name often occurs in the annals of the Romantic school. At a later period he wrote several novels, in which there is much shrewdness, and very little poetry. More important are his scientific works, especially his "Anthropology," which is full of original ideas. Yet as regards this he has not received the recognition which his merits deserved. Others have learned the art of appropriating and making them pass current as their own. Steffens has more right than his teacher had to complain that men stole his ideas. But among these ideas there was one which no one ever had save he himself, and it is his own predominant and sublime idea that Henrik Steffens, who was born the 2nd of May 1773, at Stavanger, near Drontheim, in Norway, is the greatest man of his century.

Of late years he has fallen into the hands of the Pietists, and his philosophy is nothing but a mournful, lukewarm Christian orthodoxy.

Such another is Joseph Görres, whom I have already mentioned, and who likewise belongs to the school of Schelling. He is known in Germany as *the fourth ally*. This name was given to him by a French journalist in 1814, when he, by order of the Holy Alliance, preached hatred to France. He has lived on this compliment till

Digitized by Google

to-day. Yet it is true that no one did so much as he to inflame the Germans against the French by stirring up national memories, and the journal which he edited with this intent—the *Rheinische Mercur* (the *Rhenish Mercury*)—is full of formulas of imprecation which, should a war ever break out, might again exercise a great influence.[1] The princely potentates, having no further use for him, let him run; and when he began to growl, they even persecuted him. So the Spaniards in Cuba trained bloodhounds to hunt the naked savages, but when the war was ended, the dogs, who had learned to like human blood, bit occasionally the calves of their masters, who were therefore obliged to get rid of them. When Görres, by force cast off by the princes and by them persecuted, had nothing better to snap at, he threw himself into the arms of the Jesuits, whom he served to the last, and he is now one of the great supports of the Catholic[2] Propaganda of Munich. There I saw him a few years ago in the full bloom of degradation. He delivered lectures on the history of the world to an audience which consisted chiefly of Catholic students of divinity, and had got so far as the Fall! What a terrible end

[1] A prediction which was really fulfilled in the Franco-German war.

[2] "Catholic" is again omitted in the French version.

Digitized by Google

overtakes all the foes of France! "The fourth ally" is now condemned to narrate to Catholic *seminarists* of the *École Polytechnique* of obscurantism,[1] year in, year out, and daily, the story of the Fall of man!

In the man's delivery of his lectures, there prevailed, as in his writings, the greatest confusion, so that it was not without reason that he has often been compared to the Tower of Babel. He is indeed like a great tower in which a hundred thousand thoughts work discordantly, and issue orders, and call out, and quarrel without understanding one another. Ever and anon the confusion in his head seemed to moderate a little, and then he spoke wearily, weakly, and wordily, and the monotonous phrases dropped from his sad lips like dreary rain-drops from a leaden spout. But sometimes, when the old demagogic wildness awoke in him once more, contrasting repulsively with his monkish, humbly pious words, and when he wailed with Christian love while raging for blood, and he sprang here and there, one was reminded of a tonsured hyæna.

Görres was born in Coblence, January 25, 1776. I beg leave to omit further details of his life, and those of the greater portion of his contemporaries. I have perhaps, as it is, in judging his friends the two Schlegels, gone beyond the bounds of

[1] Omitted in the French version.

Digitized by Google

criticism, as one should describe the lives of such men.[1] Ah, how painful it is when we behold too closely, not only the Castor and Pollux, but also the other planets of our literature! The stars of heaven seem so bright and pure because we see them from afar and know nothing of their private life. Doubtless there is among them many who lie and beg, deceive, are compelled to do all kinds of mean actions, kiss one another and betray, flatter their enemies, and, what is worse, their friends, just as we do here below. Those comets which we see sweeping wildly about with flowing hair, like Mænads of heaven, are perhaps libertines who in the end creep repentantly and piously into some obscure corner of heaven and hate the sun.

I have thus far only mentioned two of the pupils of Schelling who were prominent in Romanticism, and yet they were by no means the most eminent of the school. To avoid all error, I will incidentally mention that Oken and Franz Baader surpass all their contemporary collegemates. The first, the admirable Oken, has re-

[1] "'Father, I have robbed many, and I fear
That I for that sad crime deserve damnation;'
'My son, if your repentance is sincere,
You can best prove it by a reparation.'"

It does not seem to have occurred to Heine that he could have shown the sincerity of this tardy repentance by cancelling a few pages.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

mained true to the original teaching of his master. Baader has, unfortunately, devoted himself too much to mysticism; but I do not believe that, as is rumoured, he has deeply involved himself in Jesuitical intrigues. He still keeps himself fairly afar from the pious coterie of Munich, which hopes to save religion by means of philosophy.[1]

And since I have spoken of German philosophy, I cannot avoid correcting an error which I find widely current in France as regards it. Since certain Frenchmen after having studied Schelling and Hegel, gave the results to their countrymen in translation, and made application of it to French affairs, the friends of clear thought and of freedom complain that people draw from Germany crazy dreams and sophistries which bewilder men's minds, and disguise falsehood and despotism with a skin of truth and of justice. In brief, these noble minds, anxious for the interests of Liberalism, wail over the evil influence of German philosophy in France. But hereby great injustice is done to our poor German philosophy.[2] This name belongs by right only to the

[1] From the end of this sentence, that is, to the reference to the philosophers of Alexandria, three pages are omitted in the French version. The omission is not noticed by the German editor.—*Translator.*

[2] The following sentence is only to be found in the first German edition.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

investigations into the final grounds of all knowledge and being, such having been the only theme of German philosophers before the advent of Schelling. Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason" was the flower of this German philosophy.

For, firstly, that is not German philosophy at all which has been brought before the French hitherto by this title by Victor Cousin. Cousin has given the world a great deal of clever wish-wash, but no German philosophy. Secondly, the real German philosophy is that which proceeded directly from Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason," and which, troubling itself little with political or religious affairs, occupied itself all the more with the final grounds of all knowledge.

It is true that the metaphysical systems of most of the German philosophers before Schelling were too like mere cobwebs. And what harm was there in that? Jesuitism could not spin decoy-nets of lies from it, nor despotism weave with it halters to lead mankind. Since Schelling it lost this light but harmless character. It is now essentially changed, and is altogether another than a German philosophy. From that time our philosophers did not discuss the ultimate basis of knowledge and being; they soared no longer in ideal abstractions, but sought grounds on which to justify what exists. While our earlier philosophers cowered poor and abstemious in miserable garrets,

Digitized by Google

those of our time are clad in the brilliant liveries of power; they have become state-philosophers, that is, they continue philosophical justifications of all the state-interests of the land wherein they dwell. Thus Hegel, in the Protestant Berlin, embraced in his system the whole Evangelic-Protestant dogmatic; and Schelling, professor in Catholic Munich, now justifies in his lectures the most extravagant dogmas of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church.

Yes, just as the philosophers of Alexandria[1] summoned up all their genius to sustain by allegoric explanations the decaying faith of Jupiter from inevitable destruction, so our German philosophers are attempting something like it for the religion of Christ.[2] It is not worth our while to investigate whether these modern philosophers have an unselfish aim in all this, but as we see them in union with the priestly party, whose material interests are the same with those of Catholicism,[3] we call them Jesuits. Let them, however, not imagine that we confound them with the old Jesuits. Those were great and powerful men, inspired with

[1] It is interesting to trace the association of ideas in a mind which was so remarkably quick as that of Heine, and so well stored. Cousin undoubtedly suggested to him Ammonius Saccas, the Eclectic of Alexandria; hence "the philosophers of Alexandria."

[2] French version, "pour notre religion moderne."

[3] French version, "la religion."

Digitized by Google

wisdom and the power of will. Oh, the weak dwarfs who suppose that they will conquer the obstacles on which those black giants were wrecked! Mortal mind never conceived greater combinations than those by means of which the old Jesuits attempted to maintain Catholicism.[1] But they did not succeed, because they were inspired with the idea of maintaining Catholicism, and not for Catholicism itself.[2] For the latter in itself they cared little, therefore they often profaned it for the sake of power; they made arrangements and modifications with heathenism, with the potentates of this world, pandered to their vices, became murderers or merchants, and when necessary even atheists. Yet all in vain did their confessors grant the most agreeable absolution, and their casuists woo with every sin and crime. In vain did they strive with the laity in art and science, to use both for their aims. Here their want of power became manifest. They envied all great scholars and artists, but could never discover nor create anything remarkable. They composed pious hymns and built cathedrals; but in their poetry there is no free original inspiration, only a trembling

[1] There is a very rare and strange old German work entitled "Conversations of the Ghosts of a Jesuit and of a Knight Templar in Hell," in which this idea is fully developed.

[2] French version, "non pas pour le catholicisme lui-même mais pour sa conservation."—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

servility to the master of the Order; and even in their building there is only an anxious servility, a stony docility, or inspiration to order. Therefore Barrault said once and wisely, "The Jesuits could not raise earth to heaven, so they abased heaven to earth." In vain were all their efforts and their works. From the lie there comes no life, and God can never be saved by the devil.

Let us leave the Jesuits in their graves, and shrug our shoulders pityingly when we behold their successors! They are dead, and *those* are only the worms which creep from their corpses. They are as little like their predecessors as the Schelling of to-day is like the Schelling of the olden time.[1]

---

[1] The German edition adds that Schelling was born the 27th January 1775 in Wurtemburg. This is omitted in the French version.

It may here be noted that Heine's concluding remarks as to the Jesuits form one of the shrewdest, truest, and most *multum in parvo* passages in modern literature.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

I HAVE little to say regarding Schelling's relations to the Romantic school. His influence was mostly personal, but since the Philosophy of Nature through him has sprung into life and vogue, Nature has been much more intelligently grasped by poets. Some are absorbed with all their human feelings into Nature; others have noted certain magic forms by means of which something human can be made to look forth and speak from it. The former are the true mystics, and resemble in many respects the Indian devotees who sink into Nature, and at last begin to feel in common with it. The others are more like enchanters, who, by their own power of will, evoked even fiends;[1] they are like the Arabian sorcerers, who could animate every stone, or petrify, as they pleased, every living being.

To the first of these belonged Novalis, to the second Hoffmann. Novalis saw everywhere the

[1] *Feindliche Geister. Fiend,* however, really means an *inimical* spirit, and in Icelandic or old Norse any enemy whatever. —*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

marvellous, and, in its loveliness and beauty, he listened to the language of plants; he knew the secret of every young rose, he identified himself at last with all Nature; and when autumn came and the leaves fell, he died. Hoffmann, on the contrary, saw spectres everywhere; they nodded to him from every Chinese teapot and every Berlin wig; he was a magician who changed men into brutes, and these again into Royal Prussian court-councillors; he could call the dead from their graves, but he repulsed life itself from him as if it were a dismal ghost. And thus he felt that he had himself become a spectre; all Nature was to him like a badly-ground mirror, in which he, distorted in a thousand ways, saw only his own death-mask, and his works are one terrible cry of agony in twenty volumes.[1]

Hoffmann did not belong to the Romantic

[1] An *entsetzlicher Augstschrei*, in which there are many long and peaceful pauses, soft and sweet melodies, as in the "Golden Jar," children's songs and much merry laughter. Hoffmann was a man grotesque by nature, who affected the grotesque, and therefore, if not positively a mediæval Romanticist, was very nearly one. He was to the Romantic school what the grinning goblins and gargoyles of a Gothic cathedral are to its saints, of which latter Novalis is the type. Some writers maintain that these goblins are devils or damned souls keeping up "a terrible cry of agony;" but as they generally appear, like Hoffmann's characters, to be occupied in all kinds of jovial sport and boyish mischief, it would seem as if their agony sat very lightly on them.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

school. He was in no way allied to the Schlegels, and still less to their tendencies. I only mention him here in opposition to Novalis, who was really a poet of that kind. Novalis is less known in France than Hoffmann, whom Loeve-Veimars has placed before the public in such admirable form, and thereby attained such a reputation. By us in Germany, Hoffmann is no longer in fashion, but once it was otherwise. Once he was very much read, but only by men whose nerves were too strong or too weak to be affected by soft accords. Men of true genius and poetic natures would hear nothing of him; they by far preferred Novalis. But, honestly speaking, Hoffmann was, as a poet, far superior to Novalis, for the latter always sweeps in the air with his ideal forms, while Hoffmann, with all his odd imps, sticks to earthly reality. But as the giant Antæus remained invincibly strong while his feet touched his mother-earth, and lost his strength when Hercules raised him in the air, so is the poet strong and powerful so long as he does not leave the basis of reality, but becomes weak when whirling about in the blue air.

The great resemblance between these poets lies in this, that in both their poetry is really a malady, and in this relation it has been declared that judgment as to their works was rather the business of a physician than of a critic. The

Digitized by Google

rosy gleam in the writings of Novalis is not the glow of health, and the purple heat in Hoffmann's *Phantasiestücken* is not the flame of genius but of fever.[1]

But have *we* a right to make such remarks, we who are not blessed with excess of health, above all at present, when literature resembles a vast lazar-house? Or is perhaps poetry itself a disease of mankind, just as the pearl is only the material of a disease from which the poor oyster suffers?

Novalis was born May 2, 1772. His real name was Hardenberg. He loved a young lady who suffered from and died of consumption. This sad story inspires all his writings; his life was a dreamy dying in consequence, and he himself died of consumption in 1801, before he had completed his twenty-ninth year, or his novel. This work as it exists is only the fragment of a great allegorical poem, which, like the "Divine Comedy" of Dante, was to treat earnestly all things of earth and heaven. Heinrich von Ofterdingen, the famous poet, is the hero.[2] We see him as a youth in

[1] All the best pieces in the Fantastic Sketches have long ago passed into juvenile literature, and are, in fact, now published as such. Time has shown that Heine and all earlier writers made far too much of Hoffmann, and treating as a great sorcerer, in him, one who was only a clever and, at times, poetic juggler.—*Translator.*

[2] This work was very well translated into English, I believe, by a student at Cambridge, Massachusetts, and published about

Digitized by Google

Eisenach, the charming town which lies at the foot of the old Wartburg, where the greatest and also the stupidest things have been done; that is, where Luther translated the Bible, and certain idiotic Teutomaniacs burned the Gendarme Code of Herr Kamptz. There, too, in that castle, was held the great contest of minstrels, where, among other poets, Heinrich von Ofterdingen sang in the dangerous contest with Klingsohr of Hungary, an account of which has been preserved in the Manesse collection. He who was vanquished was to lose his head, and the Landgrave of Thuringia was to be the judge. The Wartburg rises as with mysterious signification over the cradle of the hero, and the beginning of the novel shows him in the paternal home of Eisenach.

The parents are still sleeping, the hanging clock beats time monotonously, the wind blows against the rattling windows; now and then the room is lighted by the rays of the moon.

The youth lay restlessly on his couch, thinking of the stranger and of his tales. "It was not the treasure," he said to himself, "which awoke in me such unutterable desire; all covetousness is far from me; but I long to see the blue flower. It haunts me all the time, and I can think and fancy

---

1841, when I read it. I regret that I cannot recall the name of the translator.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

nothing else. I never felt like this before; it seems to me as if life had been hitherto a dream, or as if I had dreamed over into another world, and now awoke. For who ever troubled himself so in the world in which I once lived about flowers? and of such a strange passion for a flower I have never heard."

Heinrich von Ofterdingen begins with such words, and the blue flower sheds its light and breathes its perfume through the whole romance. It is marvellous and full of meaning that the most imaginary characters of this book seem to us as real as if we had known them familiarly long ago. Old memories awaken, even Sophia has well-known features, and we recall perfectly the beech-tree avenues where we wandered with her, sweetly wooing; and yet it all lies in twilight, like a half-forgotten dream.

The Muse of Novalis was a slender snow-white maid with serious blue eyes, golden hyacinthine locks, smiling lips, and a little red birth-mark on the left side of the chin[1]—that is, I imagine as the Muse of Novalis the same damsel who made me acquainted with him, when I saw the red morocco bound gilt-edged copy of Henry von Ofterdingen in her beautiful hands. She always

[1] Heine has described one who was apparently one of his own Muses in "The Memoirs of Count Schnabelewopski" as having a *brown* birth-mark on the left side or hip.—*Translator.*

Digitized by Google

wore a blue dress, and was called Sophia. She lived a few leagues from Göttingen with her sister, who was a post-mistress. This latter was a jovial, plump, red-cheeked dame, with a mighty bosom garnished with stiff lace, which made it look like a fortress. And an impregnable fortress it was, for the dame was a Gibraltar of virtue. She was a busy, housewifely, practical woman, and yet her one great pleasure was to read the novels of Hoffmann. In Hoffmann she found the man who alone could shake her solid nature and give it agreeable thrills. But the very sight of a book by Hoffmann inspired in her pale, delicate sister a disagreeable sensation, and she shrunk up when she only touched one by chance. She was refined as a sensitive plant, even so were her words perfumed and gently sounding, and when she put them together they were verses. I wrote down many which she uttered, and they were strange poems, quite in the manner of Novalis, but more spiritualised and echoing. One which she spoke to me when I, about to depart for Italy, bade her adieu, is very dear to me. On a night in autumn, in a garden where there has been an illumination, there is heard a dialogue between the last lamp, the last rose, and a wild swan. The morning mists rise, the last lamp is extinguished, the last leaves of the rose fall, and the swan, spreading his white wings, flies to the south.

Digitized by Google

There are indeed in Hanover many wild swans, which in the autumn fly to warmer lands, and in the summer come to us again. They probably pass the winter in Africa, because we once found in the breast of a dead swan an arrow which Professor Blumenbach recognised as having come from that country. Poor bird! It had returned with the arrow in its breast to its Northern home to die. But there may have been many another swan thus wounded who could not make the journey, and so remains without power to fly in the burning sands of the desert, or sits with wearied wings on some Egyptian pyramid and looks with longing to the North—to the cool summer nest in the land of Hanover.

When I, towards the end of the autumn in 1828, returned—and not without the burning arrow in my breast—my way took me near Göttingen, and I stopped to change horses by my plump friend the post-mistress. I had not seen her for a year and a day, and the good woman seemed to be sadly changed. Her bosom still resembled a fortress, but one which had been sacked, the bastions levelled, the two main towers were only hanging ruins; no sentinel now watched the gate, and the heart, the citadel, was broken. As I learned from the postillion, Pieper, she had even lost her liking for Hoffmann's novels, but drank all the more gin in its place before going to bed,

Digitized by Google

which was perfectly intelligible, because they had gin in the house, but had to go a four-hours' journey to get the books from Duerlich's circulating library in Göttingen. Pieper was a small man, of as sour an expression as if he had lived on vinegar and it had drawn him all up. When I asked him as to the sister of the post-mistress, he replied that Mademoiselle Sophia would soon die, and was already an angel. It must be indeed an admirable person whom Pieper would call an angel! He said this while kicking away the cluttering and fluttering poultry with his high boots. The post-house, which was once so smiling white, had changed like its landlady; it had a sickly yellowish colour, and the walls were deeply wrinkled. Broken vehicles were in the courtyard, and by the dunghill hung on a pole, drying, a completely wet scarlet postillion's coat. Mademoiselle Sophia sat at an upper window reading, and when I came upstairs to her, I saw that she had in her hands a book gilt-edged and bound in red morocco, and it was the same copy of the Ofterdingen of Novalis. So she had read incessantly this book, till its consumption had passed into her, and she looked like a shining shadow. But she was of spiritual beauty, which deeply pained me.[1] I took her two pale thin hands and looked

[1] "Deren Anblick mich aufs schmerzlichste bewegte." French version, "Sa vue excitait une *douce* douleur." There

Digitized by Google

deeply into the blue eyes and said, "Mademoiselle Sophia, how do you do?" "Well," she replied, "and I shall soon be better!" and saying this, she pointed from the window to a new churchyard on a little hill near the house. On this bare hill stood a slender dry poplar, on which there still hung a few dry leaves, moving in the autumn wind, not as if it were a living tree, but the ghost of one.

Mademoiselle Sophia now lies under that tree, and the souvenir which she left me, the gilt-edged book bound in red morocco, the Heinrich von Ofterdingen of Novalis, now lies before me on my writing-table, and I have used it while composing this chapter.

---

are here pages together of the French translation, in almost every sentence of which there is some such variation from the German text.—*Translator.*

END OF VOL. I.

PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO.
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
GRADUATE LIBRARY

DATE DUE

MAY 6 1970

JAN 30 1973

MAY 1971

JAN 18 1972

JAN - 9 1975

DEC

Digitized by Google